



What 's New With Peer Support

Since the Department of Public Welfare's addition of Peer Support Services to the Medical Assistance (MA) Program Fee Schedule effective November 1, 2006:

Statewide

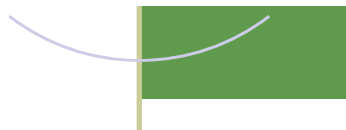
- 794 certified peer specialists have been trained
- 544 supervisors have been trained
- 48 service descriptions have been submitted
- 40 service descriptions have been approved
- In the Western Region, 16 have been approved with three additional in process
- Additional technical assistance forums for providers are being planned for July
- A SAMHSA grant project to increase the availability of Peer Support Services for older adults is moving ahead
- A Peer Support Coalition has been initiated with outreach to counties to begin soon

For more updates on Peer Support, and all new Statewide Initiatives, please visit:

www.PARecovery.org



Words for Wellness



Greetings to Our Members!

It is hard to believe another year has come and gone since our last member newsletter. It has been said, "**The only constant is change.**" Over the past year most of us have experienced some changes in our lives, some small, some big, some good, some not so good and some that offer a chance at a new beginning and hope for a better future. Most of us, especially as we get older, like routine and order in our lives. For many, change can be frightening and difficult. To help us deal effectively with change, we must look for the positive outcomes that can come from change. We change, we grow, we learn. It is our hope that some of the changes in Pennsylvania's transition to a more Recovery-Oriented System will provide us all the opportunity to change for the better—to learn, to grow and to become all that we can be.

Value Behavioral Health of PA (VBH-PA) is the Managed Care Company (MCO) working in Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cambria, Crawford, Erie, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Washington and Westmoreland Counties to ensure the success of the HealthChoices Program. You are automatically a HealthChoices member if your physical health services are managed by ACCESS Plus+, Gateway, Unison, or UPMC for You.

All VBH-PA members are sent an annual newsletter whether you are using behavioral health services or not. Information in this newsletter will help you understand any changes in your behavioral health benefits for 2008.



If you have any questions or would like to find out more about behavioral health services, call VBH-PA and talk to a Member Service Representative. Phones are answered 24/7, every day of the year.

Armstrong	1-877-688-5969
Beaver	1-877-688-5970
Butler	1-877-688-5971
Cambria	1-866-404-4562
Crawford	1-866-404-4561
Erie	1-866-404-4560
Fayette	1-877-688-5972
Greene	1-877-688-5973
Indiana	1-877-688-5974
Lawrence	1-877-688-5975
Mercer	1-866-404-4561
Venango	1-866-404-4561
Washington	1-866-688-5976
Westmoreland	1-866-688-5977
TTY - All Counties	1-877-615-8502

VBH-PA Provides Help With Navigating the System



Some staff members at VBH-PA are specially trained to assist HealthChoices' members and their families "navigate the system." **Prevention, Education and Outreach (PE&O) Coordinators** are available to provide training and educational support for HealthChoices

members and support groups to which they belong. **Recovery & Resiliency Specialists** are available to answer questions and can serve as advocates for members and their families who need help with the complaint and grievance process. Call the VBH-PA Member Services Line for your County (listed on page 1 of this newsletter) to get in touch with a PE&O Coordinator or Recovery & Resiliency Specialist.

Get Ready for Election 2008



The National Voter Registration Act of 1993, also known as the "**Motor Voter Act**", makes it easier for **all** Americans to exercise their fundamental right to vote. One of the basic purposes of the Act is to increase the historically low registration rates of persons with disabilities that have resulted from discrimination.

The Motor Voter Act **requires** all State-funded programs that are primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities, including mental health services like out-patient, residential, psych rehab, partial, case management and drop-in centers, to:

- Provide all program applicants with voter registration forms,
- Assist them in completing the forms, and
- Send completed forms to the appropriate state official.

The most important principle for 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organizations to observe is **nonpartisanship!** This principle makes sense. After all, our community service goals are shared by people who belong to various political parties or no party at all. It's a principle that people expect us to uphold. People want to know that organizations are fair and evenhanded, and don't play favorites or turn away anyone because of their political beliefs. It is also a principle embodied in the tax law that governs nonprofit organizations.

For more information, contact U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Voting Section, 1800 G, Washington, D.C. 20530 or www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting or (800) 253-3931 (voice/TTY).

Project Vote also has a lot of good information: www.projectvote.org or (800) 546-8683.

What is a Psychiatric Advance Directive?

A **Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD)** is a legal document allowing a consumer to direct his or her psychiatric treatment in the event that he or she becomes unable to make or communicate decisions about that treatment. In many states, there is a specific form for a PAD. In states without such provisions, a consumer may create a PAD using the state's Advance Directive provisions.

How long does my PAD remain valid?

Your Declaration/Power of Attorney remains valid for two years or until you revoke it, whichever period is shorter. You may revoke a Mental Health Declaration orally or in writing at any time you are capable of making mental health decisions.



If you have been involuntarily committed, you may revoke your Declaration only if a psychiatrist and another mental health professional decides you are capable of doing so.

Please visit the following link for more Pennsylvania Mental Health Resources:

Guide: "Mental Health Advance Directives for Pennsylvanians"

<http://www.nrc-pad.org/images/stories/PDFs/paguide.pdf>

This very helpful guide explains in detail what the forms are for and how to fill them out. The forms are also included in the guide.

Thinking About Quitting Smoking?



Tobacco kills and it kills those with mental illness at a higher rate and earlier than individuals without an addiction or mental health diagnosis. While overall smoking in the United States has decreased, tobacco use in those with psychiatric diagnoses **has increased**. Do yourself and those you care about a favor by exploring the many resources available to help you quit. A great place to start is by talking with your medical provider and by visiting <http://1800quitnow.cancer.gov/>. VBH-PA also contracts with providers who offer tobacco cessation services. Call the VBH-PA Member Services Line for your County (listed on page 1 of this newsletter) and ask for the names of the providers who can help you quit smoking.

Children & Family Corner

Childhood Obesity



On November 1, 2007, the Medical Assistance (MA) Program added **Childhood Nutrition and Weight Management Services** for eligible MA recipients under 21 years of age. The intent is that these services be provided by the child's Primary Care Physician (PCP). However, all physician specialties will be able to provide and be reimbursed

for these services. For example, a specialist may be acting as a PCP for a child who needs these services.

In February 2008, The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Childhood Obesity Workgroup, partnered with the Pennsylvania Medical Society, held an obesity summit, "Managing The Overweight Child In Today's Environment." These two groups are continuing to develop a provider campaign to address the **primary prevention and management** of childhood obesity and related chronic diseases. Please check with your child's PCP for more information and help with weight management.

Youth and Family Training Institute



On November 9, 2007, the Department of Public Welfare announced the creation of the **Pennsylvania Youth and Family Training Institute**. This is a partnership with the University of Pittsburgh that is designed to strengthen mental health services for children and their families

with an increased emphasis on improving the lives of children living with mental illness.

The Youth and Family Training Institute is the next stage in the evolution of the CASSP movement. Building on the success of the former Pennsylvania Child and Adolescent Service System Program Institute, the Youth and Family Training Institute represents the next phase in the department's efforts to transform Pennsylvania's children's behavioral health system. The Institute will provide training for individuals working in community mental health, focusing on engaging and empowering youth and their families, building a team to support and serve the youth and their loved ones as well as developing natural supports in lieu of paid services.

Pennsylvania has made a commitment to transforming the children's behavioral health system and will build upon the CASSP principles as Pennsylvania moves toward family-driven and youth-guided care through High Fidelity Wraparound.

High Fidelity Wraparound Counties Selected



The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) and the Youth and Family Training Institute have announced that Allegheny, Chester, Erie, Fayette, Lehigh and Montgomery counties have been selected as "early implementer" County partners of High Fidelity Wraparound. Each of these counties has made the commitment to partner with the state and the Institute to successfully implement this new practice model. OMHSAS and the Youth and Family Training Institute plan to implement High Fidelity Wraparound in all counties throughout the commonwealth over the next five years.

The early implementer counties will serve as test sites for implementation and financing approaches that maintain fidelity to the model while reflecting the diversity of each County. The County partners began their readiness planning in May, with staff training and implementation to begin in late summer. Progress and lessons learned by these six counties will be shared with all other counties. OMHSAS and the Institute will offer technical assistance this summer to counties interested in participating in the next round of implementation.

For more information, contact Shannon Fagan, Director, Youth and Family Training Institute at (412) 648-6464 or fagansm@upmc.edu.

The VBH-PA Family Advisory Committee Needs You!

The VBH-PA Family Advisory Committee is committed to representing the views of the consumer community, with the goal of ensuring appropriate delivery of behavioral healthcare services to all HealthChoices consumers.

We are currently seeking family members of adult and child consumers in Lawrence, Beaver and Greene counties to serve on this Committee. Every member of our Committee receives a stipend for their attendance to our meetings and mileage reimbursement. The Committee meets the second Tuesday of every other month at the VBH-PA Trafford Service Center.

If you are interested in joining our Committee, please contact **Karan Steele, Recovery and Resiliency Specialist**, at (724) 744-6537 or email her at Karan.Steele@ValueOptions.com.



Hi-Tech Danger

The growing appeal of online sites like MySpace and Facebook are raising fears and the eyebrows of parents all over, like a couple whose teenage daughter developed a romantic relationship online with a much older man. When her mother learned about it, she took her computer away. She hoped the relationship would end. But the daughter continued to speak with him using computers outside of her home. The “romance” escalated to secret meetings for sex before it finally ended. The teen slipped into depression. She drew further away from friends and family. She then committed suicide.

The danger is real. Below are some tips to help you communicate with your hi-tech pre-teen and teen:

- Talk to your child about what type of things they are sharing online. Ask them to make their profile "private" so only agreed upon people can see it.
- Remember that most chatting online is harmless. In fact, children can learn important information about building healthy relationships online. Try not to see these sites as evil. You want your child to feel comfortable talking to you.
- Ask what your child would do if chatting between online friends became uneasy. Be aware that chats can be used as a way of bullying, tracking or controlling your child. Encourage them to report this type of behavior to you, the website or a trusted adult.
- Talk to your child about how much chatting is too much. They should not feel like their partner is watching their every move or constantly checking in on them.

If you suspect your child is involved in an unhealthy relationship online, talk to them about it. One of the best ways to learn about your child’s activities is by keeping the lines of communication open. You can also visit and suggest your child visit <http://www.thesafespace.org/> for more information.

If you are worried about your children and need help for them or yourself, call:

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY for the Deaf)

www.ndvh.org

Help is available in English and Spanish and many other languages.

National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline

1-866-9474

1-8660331-8453 TTY

www.loveisrespect.org

Online chats are also available. All contact with the hotlines and chats are free and confidential.



Children can also get “loveisrespect” news and info about healthy relationships by signing up for the blog or adding the teen line as a friend on MySpace or Facebook.

What’s Your Opinion of HealthChoices Services?

VBH-PA and your County want to hear your opinion of the HealthChoices’ services you are receiving. A good way to do this is to speak with the **Consumer/Family Satisfaction Team (C/FST)**. A C/FST is made up of consumers, parents, family members and persons in recovery. **ALL** HealthChoices’ members and/or family members are invited to participate in completing a survey. Your survey and opinions will be used to **improve** services; to **address** any problems with programs, services or providers; and help **identify** strengths and weaknesses in the HealthChoices program. Most importantly, everything you tell the C/FST is **CONFIDENTIAL!** Below are the numbers in your County to call and volunteer for an interview:

<u>Armstrong</u> (724) 349-8230 (877) 688-5969	<u>Beaver</u> (724) 775-7650	<u>Butler</u> (724) 283-5553 (888) 223-7620
<u>Cambria</u> (814) 535-3166	<u>Crawford</u> (814) 336-2152 (800) 670-7132	<u>Erie</u> (866) 404-4560
<u>Fayette</u> (724) 438-6738	<u>Greene</u> (724) 852-5276	<u>Indiana</u> (724) 349-8230 (877) 688-5974
<u>Lawrence</u> (724) 657-0226	<u>Mercer</u> (724) 962-2690 (866) 962-2690	<u>Venango</u> (814) 678-7766 x 139 (800) 611-6217 x 139
<u>Washington</u> (724) 225-9550 x405	<u>Westmoreland</u> (724) 834-6351 (800) 871-4445	



Remember

VBH-PA has contracted providers that offer a full array of drug & alcohol and substance abuse services. Call the VBH-PA Member Services Line for your County (listed on page 1 of this newsletter) and ask about these providers.

Words for Wellness was made possible by many dedicated, hard working staff at VBH-PA. We would like to recognize and thank them and everyone who assisted with their suggestions, ideas and materials that contributed to helping us keep our members informed. Special kudos to Kim Tzoulis for the design and layout of this annual publication.



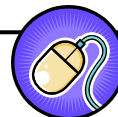
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It's Your HealthChoices – Get Involved!

HealthChoices members are often invited to attend meetings or become a member of a committee or workgroup. By attending these meetings, you learn more about the HealthChoices program, help make improvements in the HealthChoices system, and help monitor the quality of HealthChoices care. The following meetings are most often attended by HealthChoices members:

- Local or regional CSP (Community Support Program) meetings
- Oversight committees to help monitor the quality of care provided to members, and complaint and grievance meetings to decide outcomes (orientation may be required)
- VBH-PA advisory committee meetings that focus on the work of the managed care program (orientation may be required)
- Stakeholder regional meetings
- Consumer support groups
- Advocacy groups
- Planning sessions at the state hospitals
- Special events such as public hearings, training events, County's annual review and various VBH-PA forums



Check us out on the Web!
www.vbh-pa.com