

## **Community Healthcare Alliance Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** January 28, 2026

**Time:** 2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

**Location:** Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

**Chair:** Kristy Cole, Northampton County

**Co-Chair:** Matt Bauder, Lehigh County

**Minutes:** Tom Walker, Magellan

**Attendance:** 41 participants

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Kristy Cole opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the first CHA meeting of 2026. Attendees were asked to place their name and organization in the chat for attendance tracking. All note-taking tools were removed by meeting practice. Tom Walker confirmed he would record minutes.

### **2. Approval of Previous Minutes**

The November 19, 2025 CHA meeting minutes were referenced. No corrections were raised.

Kristy also reminded members to complete the meeting format survey regarding preferences for virtual versus in-person meetings. Early responses suggest interest in a hybrid model.

### **3. Provider Forum**

#### **Treatment Trends – Samantha Armitage**

Reported that the Allentown Residential Program has been open for approximately one month and is accepting referrals for male and female residential services. The program has 50 beds available.

#### **Move Forward Counseling – Charlotte Leckow**

Announced the launch of Hartwell Therapy, a separate self-pay counseling practice focused on couples, families, and relationship counseling.

### **4. Advisory Committee Updates**

#### **Member/Family Advisory – Matt Bauder (for Ronnie Colbert)**

Ronnie was unable to attend but reported that LANTA implemented a new pickup/drop-off notification system. Members are still adjusting. Providers were encouraged to continue reminding individuals about 988 and the Warmline, particularly during winter months.

### **Provider Advisory – John Jones**

Reported that Support Coordination organizations are entering performance-based contracting. Providers continue to report challenges with Medical Assistance renewals and County Assistance Office communication. The Commonwealth is exploring improved coordination across counties.

Kristy Cole thanked John Jones and his team for supporting a complex Northampton County case.

### **Children’s Advisory – Mike Ramsey**

Encouraged agencies to check in with community-delivered service staff, noting increased anxiety among frontline staff.

Valley Youth House partnered with the Lehigh Valley Phantoms Teddy Bear Toss and received 12,099 teddy bears for distribution to youth programs.

## **5. Magellan Updates**

### **Compliance – Patty Marth**

Highlighted recent communications including updates to the MA Fee Schedule, billing guidance for services following juvenile release from secure settings, addition of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services to the Medicaid State Plan, proposed OMHSAS behavioral health regulations for public comment, and a pause of DHS technical assistance webinars during January and February with resumption planned for March.

### **Network – Mike Ditty**

Provider rate increases effective January 1, 2026 will be issued through silence-is-accepted amendments. Claims processing will apply updates retroactively. Providers should ensure appropriate contacts receive Magellan communications.

### **Recovery & Resiliency – Janet Verga**

The Lehigh Valley Peer Support Network will move to a Friday morning schedule beginning in February.

Upcoming Employment Task Force webinars include Café the Lodge in February, CareerLink in March, and Goodwill Keystone in April.

Magellan My Life youth advisory group (ages 18–24) is expected to relaunch early in 2026.

### **Member and Family Advocate / Strategic Updates – Tom Walker**

The Behavioral Health Matters podcast continues in 2026 with expanded platform distribution. Planning is underway for the Autism Walk later this spring. Strategic priorities for the year include strengthening network collaboration, improving crisis coordination, clarifying IBHS services, supporting workforce development, and advancing autism service coordination.

Tom Walker also expressed condolences to Pinebrook Family Answers on the passing of Mike Schaefer.

## **6. Northampton County Updates – Kristy Cole**

Reinvestment updates included:

High Fidelity Wraparound (Pinebrook Family Answers): 28 served in 2025 with 6 currently active.

Safe Harbor Expansion in Easton is expected to begin construction in February.

Respite Program through Concern served 16 members; group respite will be limited to summer months due to utilization trends.

Conference of Churches housing bridge and contingency program served 121 individuals in 2025.

The Social Determinants of Health plan received a five-year extension from OMHSAS but future funding will depend on reinvestment availability.

The DUOS program for older adults is awaiting County Executive contract approval.

CAMS Suicide Intervention Initiative trained 56 providers; a new RFI is expected in February 2026 with additional focus on adolescents.

## **7. Lehigh County Updates – Matt Bauder**

SNAP work requirement changes took effect January 1, 2026. Guidance on potential Medical Assistance policy changes anticipated in 2027 remains pending federal clarification.

Reinvestment highlights included:

Highly Specialized ABA Program participant transitioning to IBHS with another referral pending.

Conference of Churches Clearinghouse served 265 members in 2025.

Respite program served 12 members in December with kinship respite most utilized.

High Fidelity Wraparound served 23 members in December, marking the 16th year of the program.

Health-related social needs initiative supported 105 members with transportation, food, care coordination, and education services.

DUOS program served 842 older adults and distributed holiday support vouchers in December.

Additional updates from Drew Lazo included pending guidance on ASAM fidelity audits, continued need for complaint and grievance panel members, and ongoing work with OMHSAS and iPro on suicide prevention performance improvement initiatives.

Gwen Milits reported no additional updates from Integrated Services.

### **8. Community Updates**

Carissa Samonte-Cam provided an update on Bethlehem encampment clearings. A total of 146 individuals were identified across the city, with 83 directly impacted by encampment closures. Fifty-three individuals were identified as having mental health conditions, and 27 were connected with case management services.

Janet Verga recognized the coordinated emergency shelter response during recent cold weather and noted that LANTA transportation disruptions related to natural gas shortages were affecting service routes.

### **9. Next Meeting**

The next Community Healthcare Alliance meeting will be held March 18, 2026 and will be conducted virtually.

### **10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:15 PM.