

BHRS Partner's in Quality Workgroup Minutes 2/8/10
Lehigh County Government Center

Participants: Matt Bauder – LC HC, Allison Frantz – LC HC, Tim Boyer – LC MH/MR/D&A/EI, Robin Urenko – ARCH of LV, Ellen Hunt – ARCH/Parent, Colleen Haas – Team Counseling Concepts, Kay Achenbach – LC, Corinna Bealer – LC CMHU, Tee Decker – CLIU 21, Paige Keeter – KidsPeace, Catherine Gray – Recovery Partnership, Lynn Kovich – LC DHS, Jessica Smith – LC CASSP Intern, Pat McGarry – Valley Youth House, Diane Marciano – Magellan, Susanne McFadden – Access Services, Pat Theodore – LC CASSP

ARCH Focus Groups – feedback from parents – No one at the Focus Groups had expressed any concerns. Robin will ask for feedback again at future meetings. The Spanish speaking group will be asked for feedback as well.

A parent shared a concern about Act 62. Her son's services will be cancelled due to Act 62. Her son had been with one agency for 6 ½ years. Little notice was given, 2 weeks, to find another provider. She is aware of other parents having the same problem. Her current provider is not contracted with her private insurance company so she has to look for another provider. Some providers are not contracted with some private insurance companies.

It seems as though parents will need to contact their private insurance carrier to obtain a list of providers they have contracts with rather than just utilizing the Medicaid lists. The process is complicated for both parents and providers. In some cases providers may not be paid for services. It takes days for the provider to get in contact with insurance companies and when they do speak with someone the person on the other end has no idea about what the provider is referring to when Act 62 is brought up. Providers have been having difficulties with UBH and Aetna. Highmark and Capital have been easier to work with. For some companies there is a \$5,000 deductible for the family.

According to the PCPA Weekly Newsletter (PA Community Providers Association) issues were addressed in the newsletter. Both providers and families have been experiencing problems. The State was contacted is aware there are significant issues. Comments or questions from families and providers can be sent to the State via a link, go to www.paautisminsurance.org. Services that are funded vary from one insurance company to the next. If MBH has funded provider services in the past (i.e. in the school or day care) and the private insurance company denies the service, then the denial letter needs to be received and then a packet needs to be completed and sent to the State or Magellan. Different insurance companies are requiring different things.

Some authorizations are for only 4 weeks and then the provider needs to spend 2 hours on the phone for another authorization.

It was suggested that we have another Act 62 meeting to allow families and providers express their concerns/issues. Perhaps Sherry Peters from Harrisburg should attend the meeting. Tim will reach out to David Gates about scheduling another meeting.

Tasks:

- Providers will send concerns to the Pa Autism Insurance website. Providers will let the group know about any responses they received.
- Tim will contact David Gates about Act 62 training/meeting in Lehigh County due to the concerns expressed by families and providers.
- Pat – make sure that Act 62 information is on Lehigh County website.

BHRS Concerns/Issues as identified from previous meetings:

1. **Length of time it takes for service from the date of application (QIA results – 8-35 days)**
 - Turnover of staff
 - When families decide to change the hours originally requested.
 - Specific requests; male vs. female, age of worker, etc.
 - Window for after school hours is very narrow.
 - Making sure there is a good match.

Discussion – From a providers perspective it is difficult to fill after school hours for all. The window of opportunity to provide services is very narrow, the hours of 3 to 6 pm or 4 to 7 pm. It is difficult for a full-time worker to get in 40 hours per week after school and on the weekends. Staff might be willing to work until 9 pm however families generally want the provider out of the home by 7 pm. Some staff do not want to work every weekend either because they have their own families.

The HUB Club may be a good place for a teenager to work on social skills as a 30 year old provider may not be the best for teaching socialization skills. This could be considered as an extension of or graduation from BHRS services. Today there are more services/options offered than what had been available in the past.

One provider stated that they do not lose many staff. If a family cancels an appointment they can go into the office and do some filing at half pay. One provider does not have contract workers, they have part-time employees. Another provider uses contract workers due to the union. Different set-ups work best for different employers.

Lehigh County Children's Mental Health Unit has not been receiving calls from families having difficulties in locating a provider. CMH staff will assist families in calling providers.

With Act 62, some providers are reluctant to take some new clients because they may not get paid for services already provided.

2. **If approved hours of service are unable to be staffed, parents fear the hours will be reduced and they will never know if the hours of service taken away could have made a significant difference.**

3. **Concerns about the skill level of workers**

One provider has classes online called "Essential Learning". There are over 400 trainings available (disabilities, medications, safety issues, etc.) A test is taken after the

completion of the training. What amount of education/training is offered to human service workers, providers, etc?

ASSERT is developing curriculum to train small groups/providers. The ASSERT trainings will help individuals develop skill sets. The ARCH had trainings as well, both parents and providers participated. The trainings are offered in the morning and in the evening.

One parent stated that she would rather have 5 *quality* TSS hours per week than 25 “babysitting” hours. The same is true with the BSC; 2 hours per week that are well spent will be beneficial. The treatment planning process needs to involve everyone with identification of specific, measurable, and expected outcomes. This is something that needs further exploration.

The ARCH had focus groups in which parents and providers identified trainings. Many trainings/topics were identified. The list will need to be prioritized and core trainings identified before beginning to work on this. There are skills and talents in our provider community and we could reach out to collaboratively offer these trainings. We could choose the top 20 trainings and offer them within a year. The ARCH, MBH, ASSERT, Providers, and the county can develop/contribute to this. The IU has a summer academy and much training is offered for free.

Concerns were addressed about paying staff to participate in the trainings. Some providers pay their staff to go to trainings and for travel as well.

This group can look at levels of trainings and modules, a generic list of core trainings that staff/families need. After that is developed, we can look at whom in our community has the expertise to provide these trainings. If we do not have any local instructors, we can look at other resources. We will need to include ASSERT representatives at our meetings. Lynn will reach out to Kathy to see if she can join our group. We may need to look at funding issues as well. Different providers can open up their trainings to other providers. MR providers also have trainings as well.

Tasks:

- Ellen will send the list of trainings requested from the focus groups at the ARCH to Pat so she can send out to the group before the April meeting.
- BHRS Partners in Quality Workgroup – will review the list of trainings and prioritize the list. If you are aware of any experts in this area, note that as well.
- Providers can share trainings that they already offer to employees in the area of Autism.
- Pat will send out an invitation to Milestones and Glen Koch to participate in future BHRS meetings.

4. TSS providing services and BSC not coming to the home (1 instance for 5 weeks)

5. Parents cancel services frequently.

One provider gave an example of being able to set up services for a family for 20 hours per week and after everything was set up the family changed the hours of service

provision. The provider is now unable to staff the request due to the change in hours. It is not uncommon for families to change the hours that are already staffed and then the provider is unable to then find coverage.

6. Staffing on weekends

7. Staff is fearful of going into difficult neighborhoods.

Diane from MBH shared an announcement for Webinar training on 3/11 from 9:00-10:30. More information can be viewed on their website at www.MagellanofPA.com. The title is "Autism Studies: From Research to Treatment". The ARCH has agreed to host this as well; the limit is 25 for individuals going to the ARCH. Feel free to share this information, anyone can participate. Individuals will need to RSVP at the website above.

Magellan is very proud of their website. It is designed for families and providers. A variety of things can be added to the website: provider events; things that are important to members or families; things that are going on at the ARCH; announcements; new staff that providers have. The website does have links to the county. Individuals can check on their benefits, eligibility for providers, the latest news from Magellan, and free trainings. Information for the website can be sent to Diane Marciano until an official person is identified.

Future Meetings:

Monday April 12, 2010

Monday June 14, 2010

Monday August 9, 2010

Monday October 11, 2010

Monday December 13, 2010