

LUZERNE-WYOMING COUNTIES MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES (MHDS)  
ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

**Advisory Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 24, 2022**  
*Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting*

*Participants:* Commissioner Tom Henry – Chairman, Linda Armstrong, Raelene Daring, Melisa Littleton, Craig Mark, Jillian Matyjevich, Tom O'Neill, Councilman Steve Urban, Dave Wilson. Staff: Tara Fox – Administrator, Amy Tomkoski, Margaret Manley, Phil Buickus, Joe Kloss, Joan Kaminski, Mike Donahue. Public: Kevin McConlogue, Wyoming County Examiner.

**Welcome** – Commissioner Henry, Chairman of the MHDS Advisory Board, opened the meeting at 4:05 p.m. by welcoming everyone.

**Approval of December 9, 2021 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes** – Commissioner Henry presented a motion to accept the minutes of the December 9, 2021 Advisory Board meeting. This was moved by Mr. O'Neill and seconded by Ms. Armstrong. All were in favor to accept the minutes as written.

**Introduction of New Advisory Board Members/Appointments/Reappointments and Vacancies** – Ms. Fox welcomed and introduced newly appointed Advisory Board member, Jillian Matyjevich, who represents the Nursing field and was a former member of the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team. Ms. Fox also mentioned that Scott Crispell was appointed to the Board but was unable to attend today's meeting. He represents the field of Local Citizens' Organizations Active in the Field of Developmental Services. Ms. Matyjevich and Mr. Crispell were appointed to the Advisory Board by the Luzerne County Council to serve a 3-year term ending December 31, 2024.

The Wyoming County Commissioners re-appointed Dave Wilson to serve on the Advisory Board for a 3-year term ending December 31, 2024.

Dr. Carl Charnetski informed the County MHDS Office that he will not be renewing his 3-year term with the Advisory Board which ended December 31, 2021. He extended his best wishes to MHDS staff and Advisory Board members. Mr. O'Neill suggested that Dr. Charnetski be thanked for his long-time service on the Board. Commissioner Henry will forward a letter of appreciation.

There are currently two vacant seats on the Board: One representing the Physicians field and one representing Local Citizens' Organizations Active in the Field of Mental Health/Consumer Representative.

**Advisory Board Education Component: Overview of MHDS Services** – Tara Fox, MHDS Administrator; Amy Tomkoski, MHDS Deputy Administrator; Margaret Manley, Fiscal Director; Joe Kloss, System of Care (SOC) Project Director and Phil Buickus, Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) Manager provided an overview of Mental Health Services, Developmental Services, Fiscal Services, SOC and the SCO, respectively. Please see attached PowerPoint.

**Administrator's Report**

- *Mental Health Services Update* - Ms. Fox provided the Mental Health Services update. Please see attached report. The following was also discussed:
  - Ms. Fox asked if any Board members are interested in participating on the judging panel for the upcoming Children's Mental Health Awareness Creative Art Contest, participating in the Fork Over Love event by handing out meals/information or participating in any other Mental Health Awareness Month events,



please email her at tara.fox@luzernecounty.org or Joan Kaminski at joan.kaminski@luzernecounty.org. Commissioner Henry noted his interest in planning a Fork Over Love event in Wyoming County. Ms. Fox said the County MHDS Office would need to know which restaurants in Wyoming County would be interested in participating since the County sponsors the event at \$10 per meal. Ms. Armstrong offered to assist in facilitating contact with Fork Over Love Board members if needed.

- Discussion occurred regarding the increase in referrals to Residential Treatment Facilities (RTF's). Mr. O'Neill noted his concern as an Advisory Board member. Ms. Fox indicated that the County MHDS Office does not support RTF placement since positive results are not seen.
- Luzerne-Wyoming Counties proposed to close 10 beds at Clarks Summit State Hospital in order to assist existing Community Hospital Integrated Projects Program (CHIPP's) homes by providing increased wages for staff. The State awarded Luzerne-Wyoming Counties two closures. Monies for these two closures will go directly to CHIPP providers for staff.
- Ms. Fox noted her interest in the Re-Entry Program and participating in the Re-Entry Coalition to assure a connection with Mental Health services. Ms. Armstrong indicated that she is now spearheading the Coalition in order to re-activate it. Commissioner Henry also noted his interest. He reported that there is \$2 million available for Luzerne and Wyoming Counties re-entry efforts. Ms. Armstrong mentioned that Dress for Success has been available for those inmates released who only have minimal clothing. Ms. Armstrong also mentioned that this has been one of her passions. Ms. Fox stated she will be happy to represent Mental Health.
- Mr. Wilson requested an update regarding psychiatric coverage. Ms. Fox reported that Geisinger Health System anticipates opening their new inpatient psychiatric facility in approximately one year. This will be a 96-bed facility for adults and children. Existing psychiatric beds will be closed and relocated to this new facility in Moosic. First Hospital has psychiatric coverage but are at staff capacity as opposed to bed capacity. It was suggested that although funding for direct care workers has been a challenge, legislators can be encouraged to assist with increased funding. Psychiatrists are not attracted to this area compared to what larger cities have to offer culturally or in the arts. Tele-med also continues to be utilized.
- *Financial Services Update* – Ms. Manley, Fiscal Director, reviewed the Revenue and Expenditure Report through February 28, 2022 for fiscal year 2021-2022. Please see attached report. The report shows a net balance loss since the County MHDS Office is awaiting receipt of signed contracts from some of the large providers. Mr. O'Neill questioned why providers have not submitted signed contracts for 2022. Ms. Manley reported that the contracts were forwarded to providers in January and staff are working to assure contracts are received.
- *Developmental Services Update* – Ms. Tomkoski, MHDS Deputy Administrator, provided the Developmental Services update. Please see attached report. Commissioner Henry commended the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month activities and the social media presence.
- *Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) Update* – Phil Buickus, SCO Manager, provided the SCO update. Please see attached report. The following was also discussed:

Mr. Wilson requested an update regarding White Haven Center. Ms. Tomkoski and Mr. Buickus reported transition meetings continue. There is much hesitancy with family members to transition their loved ones out of White Haven Center. Individuals have the option of moving from White Haven Center to Selinsgrove

Center, one consumer has moved to that facility. There are currently 21 individuals residing at White Haven Center from Luzerne-Wyoming Counties. This began with 31 individuals which is an aging demographic. Funding will follow the individuals who are transitioning under Consolidated Waiver funding.

Commissioner Henry presented a motion to accept all reports. This was moved by Mr. O'Neill and seconded by Mr. Wilson.

**Other Business** – Ms. Matyjevich thanked everyone and asked that she be contacted wherever she can assist. She noted that it was a pleasure meeting everyone.

Commissioner Henry noted his appreciation for everyone.

**Public Comment** – No comments were made by the public.

**Adjournment** – With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by: Craig Mark/jd  
Craig Mark, Secretary  
Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Mental Health and Developmental Services Advisory Board



# Mental Health & Developmental Services

# Mission Statement

To promote opportunities for persons with mental and intellectual disabilities to be a part of and participate in the same valued experiences and life events as do other citizens. This mission will be accomplished through individually determined levels of support and services provided in a manner that protects the individual's dignity and enhances the capacity for self determination.

The principle elements of the Mission Statement are:

## **Self-determination**

- "Self-determination" means freedom of choice, self-representation, and control, entrusting the individual to choose their own service needs and desired outcomes.

## **Community membership**

- "Community membership" means integration, full participation, and acceptance of the individual into the community. Services must be made available to correspond with the needs and lifestyles of the individuals living in the community.

## **Competence**

- "Competence" means the individual has the ability to function effectively. Additionally, competence means the individual is capable of developing appropriate social skills, learning problem solving strategies, dealing with interpersonal stress, and making appropriate decisions of life, relationship, job, friends, and where and with whom to live.



# MHDS Department...At-A-Glance

- Mental Health supports more than 19,000 consumers in Luzerne-Wyoming Counties annually.
- Developmental Services supports over 2000 consumers in Luzerne-Wyoming Counties
- Early Intervention supports 500 children in Luzerne-Wyoming Counties.
- The MHDS Department, including administration, fiscal, mental health and Supports Coordination has 73 full time team members.

# Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Mental Health

- We are primarily an administrative office - offering no direct service to consumers
- We fund and contract with multiple community based agencies to provide direct Mental Health services
- We are responsible to ensure the residents of Luzerne and Wyoming Counties have a complete array of Mental Health services available to them. These services range from least restrictive (Outpatient and/or Case Management services) to most restrictive (Clark Summit State Hospital)
- We partner with the state to monitor and review these agencies and the services they provide
- Our staff also have fiscal and service oversight as members of the Board of Directors for Northeast Behavioral Health Care Consortium (NBHCC) - our managed care entity.



**System of Care (SOC):** A coordinated network of community-based services and supports organized to meet the challenges of children and youth and their families.

### **System of Care services should be**

- family driven;
- youth driven;
- individualized, strengths based, and evidence informed;
- culturally and linguistically competent;
- provided in the least restrictive environment;
- community based;
- accessible;
- collaborative and coordinated across an interagency network.



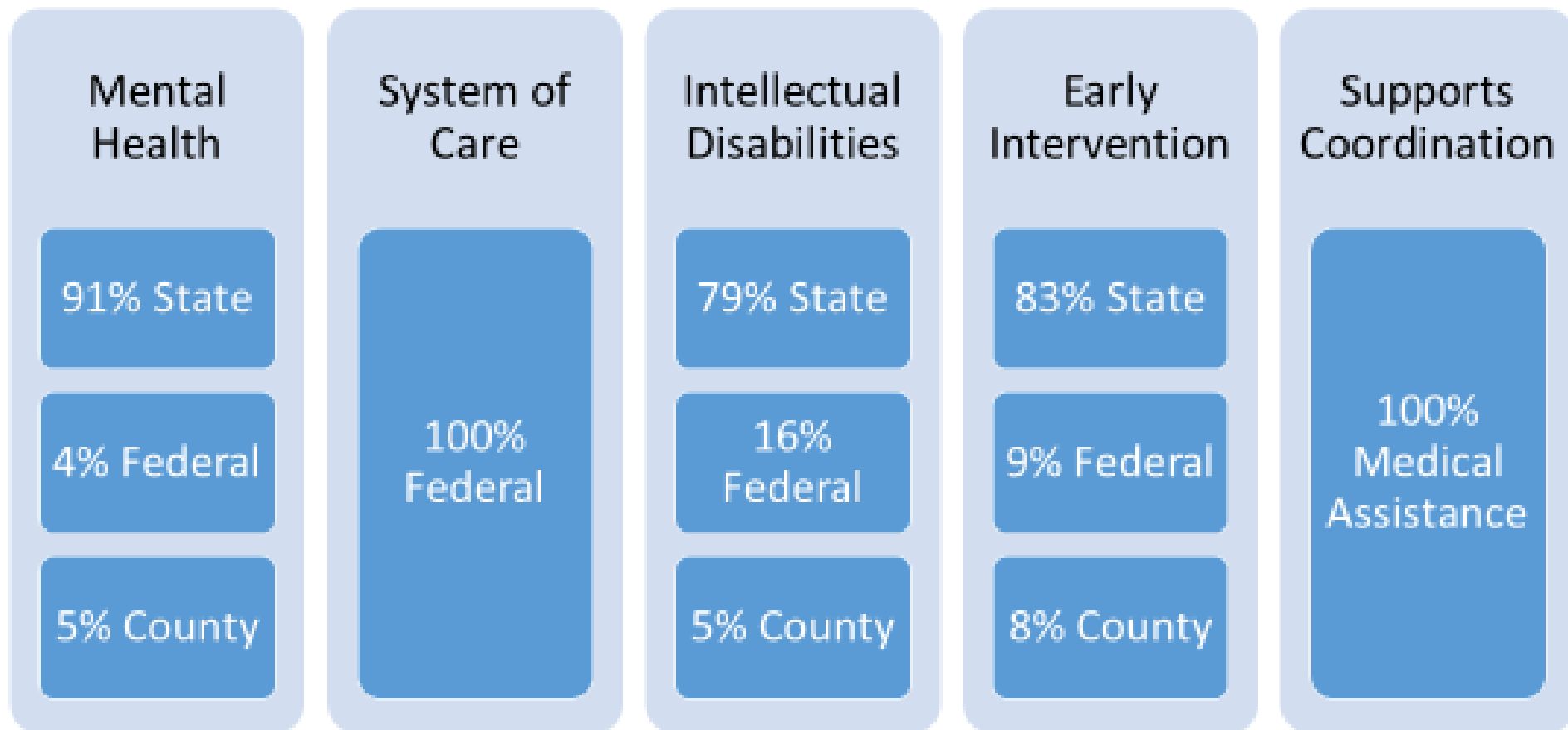
# Purpose of Luzerne-Wyoming Counties System of Care

To improve the infrastructure, and provide coordinated services, to benefit children and youth with serious emotional disturbances and their families.

The population to be served involves youth up to age 21, including transition age youth, and those with early onset of serious mental illness.

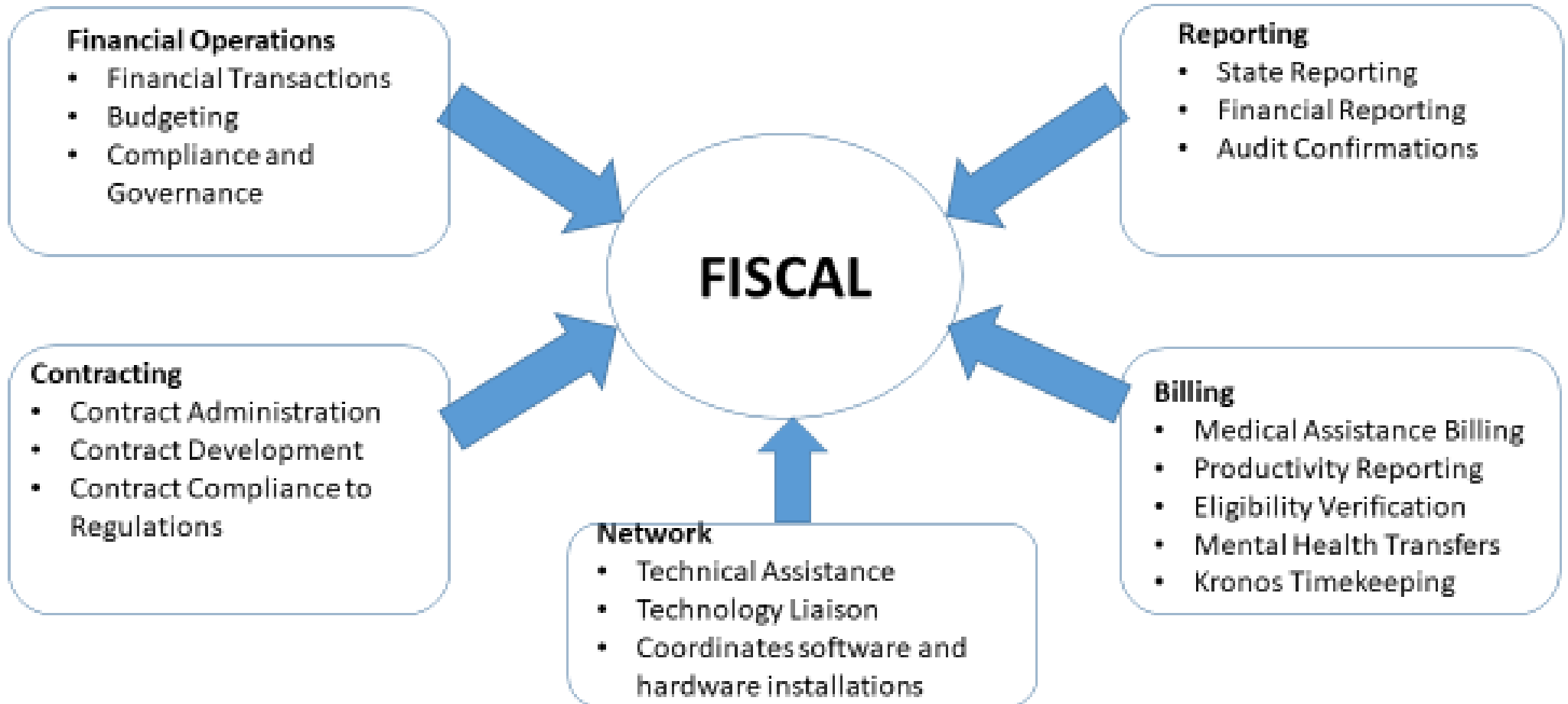
The youth receiving services will be representative of the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the two counties, with special focus on underserved and hard-to-engage youth.

## LUZERNE-WYOMING COUNTIES MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES FUNDING





# LUZERNE-WYOMING COUNTIES MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES



# Early Intervention Services for Infants & Toddlers (Birth Through 2 Years of Age)

Early Intervention in Pennsylvania consists of services and supports designed to help families with children who have developmental delays or disabilities. Early Intervention builds upon the natural learning that occurs in a child's first few years of life. It is a process that promotes collaboration among parents, service providers and others, who are significantly involved with a child.

## Primary Developmental Areas

- Ability to move, see and hear - Physical development
- Ability to talk, express needs - Language and speech development
- Ability to relate to others - Social and emotional development
- Ability to eat, dress and take care of themselves - Self help (or adaptive) development
- Ability to think and learn - Cognitive development



# Developmental and Autism Services

- State Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)
- ODP contracts with us as the Administrative Entity “AE” to conduct administrative functions for three (3) Medicaid Waivers.
- The AE is also responsible for conducting eligibility assessments for individuals, qualifying and monitoring providers, ensuring quality service delivery and providing technical assistance to the provider network.

# Supports Coordination Unit

Supports coordination promotes opportunities for persons with intellectual/emotional disabilities and autism to be a part of their communities...enabling valued experiences and life events that promote individual dignity and self determination

- Serving ages birth and beyond
- Identify an individual's vision for future and supports services needed to achieve their life plan
- Locate—community life activities, supports services, person driven planning
- Connect-facilitate connections to personal communities, activities and services
- Coordinate- supporting individuals in their effort to participate their community's life
- Monitor-insure that community connections and systems' services meet desired goals and needs
- Advocate-promote opportunity to live, love, work, play and follow life's dreams



**Mental Health Services Update for MHDS Advisory Board  
March 2022**

- Mental Health Department met with Northeast Counseling Services, Children’s Service Center, and Community Counseling Center to discuss how crisis services were operating. County administration stressed the need for more community outreach to reduce the number of consumers seeking support at local Emergency Rooms. Program Specialists have noticed a significant increase in the amount of time members are spending in the ER while waiting inpatient admission. Program Specialists will now hold team meetings for consumers who has been waiting for an extended amount of time. Program Specialist will include the Community Care Behavioral Health (CCBH) risk managers in these meetings with an effort to reduce waiting times in the Emergency rooms.
- CASSP (Child and Adolescent Service System Program) has been seeing an increase in referrals from providers, mostly hospitals and the Luzerne Intermediate Unit (LIU) #18, recommending Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) level of care for children when least restrictive mental health services have not been tried.
- The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) approved our Northeast Behavioral Health Care Consortium (NBHCC) Reinvestment plan to create a Mobile Crisis Response and Stabilization Services (MCRSS) team to serve children/adolescents and families within Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. CCBH has formally issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the service. Proposals are due by April 8, 2022. Vendor selection will be done on May 20, 2022 with an anticipated program start date of July 1, 2022.

These services will be provided face-to-face, in the home and community, within no more than one (1) hour of the families’ request. This service effectively bridges the child/adolescent and family out of crisis with in-home and community supports until stabilization and/or successful transition to the appropriate level of care occurs. The service also offers an opportunity to preemptively address clinical needs prior to what is formally identified as a “crisis event” occurs.

Basic components of MCRSS include:

1. The crisis is defined by the parent/caregiver and/or youth themselves.
2. MCRSS is connected to a single point of access and supports a no-wrong-door approach.

*Mental Health Services Update for MHDS Advisory Board - March 2022*

3. There is a distinction between the Response Service component (up to 72 hours) and the Stabilization Service component (up to 8 weeks) and they must be connected.
  4. The Mobile Response Service is delivered in-person and in-home or community settings and is available within 60 minutes of contact, with telephone crisis support, until in-person response arrives. The Response Service is provided for up to 72 hours.
  5. The Stabilization Service must both support the youth's ability to manage daily activities and establish clear connections to community supports (not necessarily clinical interventions) for the youth and family, as needed. The Stabilization Service is provided post crisis and can be offered for up to eight (8) weeks until the necessary community-based services are initiated.
- The Suicide Prevention Committee continues to examine statistical data specific to suicide rates for Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. The committee is partnering with System of Care for an awareness campaign. The committee has also planned additional events including, but not limited to, a weekly table at the Farmer's Market, predesigned coasters to be shared with local restaurants and bars, billboards and community educational events. We are also planning Suicide Prevention First Aid Training, Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) train the trainer opportunities and community outreach for 2022.

Our suicide prevention brochure was distributed to all Luzerne county departments with public access. In partnership with the Wilkes-Barre Health department, brochures were distributed to local businesses

- We continue to partner with WBRE to raise awareness on Mental Health and Developmental Services. Below is a sample of monthly topics
  1. December – Handle with Care
  2. January - Trauma
  3. February – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
  4. March – Developmental Disability Awareness Month
  5. April – Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)
  6. May – Mental Health Awareness Month
- We have begun planning for Mental Health Awareness Month
  1. Strike Out the Stigma RailRiders Game



*Mental Health Services Update for MHDS Advisory Board - March 2022*

2. Children’s art contest
3. Family Fun Day
4. Multiple trainings

Clarks Summit State Hospital (CSSH) Census	148
CSSH Luzerne/Wyoming Counties	52
2021 Suicide Data	57
2022 Suicide Date to date (January and February)	9

**REVENUE & EXPENDITURE REPORT**  
**FY 21-22 (THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2022)**

	<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>
DPW/FEDERAL	\$ 9,803,032.76		MH EXPENDITURES \$ 8,733,579.62
LUZ/WY COUNTY MATCH	\$ 2,005,384.27		ID EXPENDITURES \$ 3,491,333.16
MA REVENUE (TSM/EI)	\$ 1,312,409.14		EI EXPENDITURES \$ 1,043,704.31
MISC INCOME	\$ 1,316,351.54		
	\$ 14,437,177.71		\$ 13,268,617.09

NET INCOME/FUND BALANCE, AS OF 02/28/22)	\$ 1,168,560.62
A/P at 02/28/22	1,255,424.00
ADJUSTED NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ (86,863.38)



## **Developmental Services Update for MHDS Advisory Board March 2022**

### **COVID Update**

- Providers continue to report cases and follow mitigation guidelines.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds are being dispersed to providers for rate increases and staff retention.

### **Early Intervention (EI)**

- Luzerne Wyoming Counties EI is leading the entire state with Parent-to-Parent direct referrals so far this fiscal year.

### **Developmental Services (DS)**

- Employment Coalition's Video Series "2 Minutes to Employment" easy to digest videos on a variety of employment related subjects: Why should I work? How do I get employment supports? Can I keep my benefits? How can I request accommodations? The videos are posted on the Coalition's Facebook (FB) page.
- March Developmental Disabilities (DD) Month Activities:
  - Main focus this year has been to increase our social media presence with our DD Month FB page and it has been going great!
  - Daily emails and FB posts with facts about DD and inclusion.
  - Information about virtual and community based trainings
  - Posting our 20 Celebration of Abilities Award Winners
  - Random Acts of Kindness in the Community, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year and over 20 Provider Agencies are participating
  - Segment on WBRE PALive aired March 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) Update for MHDS Advisory Board March 2022**

The SCO currently provides service to 2,121 individuals and continues to provide linkage and monitoring services throughout the Covid 19 pandemic period. Now that the rates of both counties we serve are in the moderate range of transmission, we have reinstated face-to-face visits with our consumers. The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is currently at work developing a hybrid model that would allow for occasional virtual monitoring to supplement face-to-face visits in the future.

The SCO has seen declines in positive Covid tests for consumers each month this quarter. Through our partnership with PA Link, the SCO has received 24 “in home” Covid tests that will be distributed to consumers. We expect there will be more of these tests provided to us in the future.

Assisting consumers in obtaining and maintaining community employment remains a priority for the SCO, and we continue to work closely with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). We have seen small but positive growth in the employment of the consumers we serve. In December 2021, there were 154 consumers with jobs in the community, with an increase to 159 in March 2022.

With March being Developmental Disabilities Awareness month, the SCO continues to participate in our “Random Acts of Kindness” program while also spreading the word about our agency and services. So far this month, pizza and drinks were provided to the health care workers at Ultra Care Urgent Care in Kingston. Also, a donation of disinfecting wipes provided by Lowe’s was facilitated by the SCO and given to the Volunteers of America. VOA oversees several programs such as Manna House and Ruth’s Place, working with homeless populations and “at risk” individuals, and will ensure these locations receive these products.