



The Advocacy Insider

Winter, 2017

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Message from The Arc Alliance Board

The next few years will bring some big changes to our service system and the individuals who are receiving these services. On January 11th the Office of Developmental Programs announced their plan to close Hamburg Center by June 2018. Because of Federal Medicaid requirements, the state will now be required to offer more inclusive programming to continue receiving the federal match for community services. At this time, we do not know how they are going to meet these mandates until final details are determined. Our main concern will be how to implement these changes while minimizing the impact and stress on the individuals receiving services. It will be important for individuals to work closely with their Supports Coordinator and teams to minimize the impact and stress and develop programs that meet each person's needs, wants and dreams.

Sincerely,
Bill Davis,
Chairperson

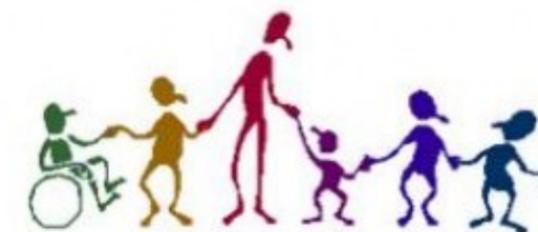
Upcoming Proposed Waiver Changes

There are upcoming changes planned over the next several years in the Intellectual Disability/ Developmental Disability service system, including waiver changes. These waivers serve 32,000 people across the state of Pennsylvania. In December, proposed waiver changes were published for review and the Department of Human Services (DHS) received over 2,000 comments throughout the public comment period.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is the federal organization that oversees all Medicaid programs, including waiver programs. These waivers are required to be renewed every 5 years to meet qualifications. Governor Wolf and his administration is committed to serving more people in the community. Although these changes are in progress, pre-vocational workshops are not closing and these services will not be taken away.

DHS is finding ways to increase employment and community involvement for people who want to make that dream a reality. A new service category is being proposed called "Community Participation Support Services", which provides a range of community activity options, while also including the existing sheltered workshops and adult training programs.

Although The Arc Alliance Supports Coordinators are required to comply with all laws and regulations, please understand that Supports Coordinators are here to support and advocate for you. Feel free to speak with your Supports Coordinator, email ODP at RAodpcomment@pa.gov or call the Arc Alliance at 610-265-4700 with any questions or concerns. As DHS and ODP continue to provide updates, your Supports Coordinator and The Arc Alliance will continue to be available every step of the way.



Information for this article was obtained from Deputy Secretary Nancy Thaler and the Office of Developmental Programs.

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ Chat and Chew: 2/28/17, 3/14/17, 4/18/17 from 11:30am-1:00pm and 3/21/17 from 7:00-8:30pm (see website or call for topics and details)
Location: 3075 Ridge Pike ,Eagleville, PA 19403
- ◆ MAX Association Forum with Deputy Secretary Nancy Thaler: 2/23/17 from 6:30-8:30pm **RSVP: with your Supports Coordinator by 2/16/17
Location: Church on the Mall- 500 W. Germantown Pike Plymouth Meeting PA, 19462
- ◆ DREAM Symposium for Post-Secondary Education: 3/22/17-3/23/17 ***Registration deadline is 3/8/17 (www.dreampartnership.org)
Location: Best Western Premier- 800 East Park Drive Harrisburg, PA 17111
- ◆ Montgomery County IU Resource Expo: 4/6/17 from 6:30-8:30pm
Location: Perkiomen Valley High School- 509 Gravel Pike, Collegeville, PA, 19426
- ◆ Supports Coordination Informational Night: 4/19/17 from 6-7pm at The Arc Alliance *RSVP: 610-382-5831 or ahundley@thearcalliance.org
- ◆ Father's Group: 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month from 10:00am to 12:00pm
Location: 3075 Ridge Pike, Eagleville, PA 19403, Contact Paul Stengle at 484-868-0443

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Did you know?

- If you have friends or family interested in learning more about Supports Coordination, The Arc Alliance is hosting an SCO Information night on 4/19/17 at 6pm.
- Contact the LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095 for more information about reducing heating bills for low-income families.

The Arc Alliance

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Individual Spotlight- Josh Shusterman

Josh is a 26 year-old young professional living independently in an apartment in Narberth, PA. He lives alone, but is looking for a girlfriend that he would like to live with one day. He currently works as a job coordinator at Career Link, which actually started out as a volunteer position before being hired as a paid employee. This year, Josh won JEVS' Inspiration Award for the ability to inspire others with his story.

Prior to working, Josh graduated from Beacon College in Florida and earned his Bachelor's degree in Human Services and an Associate's degree in Web and Social Media. One of his favorite memories from college was having many supportive friends around. During his junior and senior years of college, he lived by himself in an apartment with a full-sized bathroom and kitchen. Although it's been a few years since he graduated, he still keeps in contact with his friend Matt, who supported him throughout his college career.

Josh chose a career in Human Services because he was inspired by all the people who helped him throughout his life, and he wanted to give back to others just as they had. His entire family supports him too. When asked what he loves and appreciates most about his family, Josh stated, "I appreciate that my family is there for me no matter what happens."

When not working, Josh enjoys being outdoors and playing basketball and baseball. He also likes watching football and baseball, spending time with friends, and playing video games. Josh also is an experienced traveler, previously visiting Amsterdam, Paris, Normandy, and Israel. During the summer of 2017, he'll travel to Tuscany, Italy to attend his cousin's wedding. If Josh could travel anywhere, he'd like to visit Australia.

Josh's life motto is: "Life is a journey and it's always important to have a backup plan on that journey." Those are wise words to live by. Congratulations to Josh for all he's accomplished so far in his life and for being an inspiration to others!



Josh in his apartment.



Supports Coordination Spotlight- Louis Gonzalvez

Louis began working at The Arc Alliance in October of 2014 and was promoted to Supervisor on 11/7/16.

Louis' favorite part about working in Supports Coordination is problem solving as a team with others. This requires patience and the ability to see another person's point of view. He also enjoys seeing someone he supports reach their goal, no matter how big or small. Louis' biggest accomplishment as a Supports Coordinator is building rapport and trust with the individuals and families he works with.

Attend Pottstown's Art Walk Event

On Saturday 5/6/17 from 2-8pm, downtown Pottstown will host its Art Walk event, which is open to everyone! People can walk or be shuttled around town. Stores and restaurants will open their doors, in addition to food, vendor tables, activities, and demonstrations.

In addition to the Art Walk, there are 2 other Pottstown events planned for the same day: annual PowPow on the Manatawny Creek in Memorial Park and May Day festivities at Pottsgrove Manor.

Additional details and information to be determined. Come out to this wonderful community event!

All photos in this issue: Microsoft Clip Art or with individual's permission.

Looking For Supports Coordination Services? You'll Need:

*Psychological Evaluation with an IQ below 70

Then, Contact Your County's Intake Office:

Berks 610-236-0530 Bucks 215-444-2800

Chester 610-344-6265 Montgomery 610-278-5666

Philadelphia 215-685-4677

The Arc Alliance

We strive to support families and individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities and other disabilities by providing exceptional personal services, support and training; inspiring hope, potential, and well-being; ensuring valued life experiences and treatment expected by all people.

Obtaining Assistance in Your Golden Years



As people in the "baby boomers" generation continues to age, many of them are continuing to care for their adult children with disabilities. This may become difficult due to increasing age and health issues. Many older parents feel worn out and don't know where to turn. Did you know that Pennsylvania has a department of aging, which provides financial and service assistance to many senior citizens? Here are some potential options, which may be worth exploring!

- **PA Aging Waiver:** This program provides financial assistance to people over the age of 60 who still live in their home and meet the level of care criteria. Waiver money can be used for in-home care, respite, home modifications, transportation, and meals. For more information, please contact your local aging agency. You can also visit www.aging.pa.gov or call the statewide number at 717-783-1550.
- **Options Program:** This program is for people over 60 who experience frailty, which impacts daily living. Services provided include care management, person care services, and emergency response systems. Call your local aging agency for details.
- **PACE and PACENET:** These are two of PA's prescription assistance programs. To qualify, you must be over 65 and meet the income requirements. For PACE, the income requirement is less than \$14,500 for a single person and \$17,700 for a married couple. For PACENET, it's less than \$23,500 for a single person and \$31,500 for a married couple. For more information, please call 1-800-225-7223.
- **Medicare Supplement Plan:** This is also commonly known as Medigap and/or MedSup. The purpose is to cover certain health expenses that regular Medicare doesn't cover, such as deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses. There are 10 plans in PA and are labeled with a letter; all plans with the same letter provide the same coverage, no matter which insurer you choose.
- **PA Patient Assistance Program Clearinghouse (PA PAP):** This prescription assistance service provides information about other programs besides PACE and PACENET. It's offered for anyone over 18, regardless of income.
- **Living Independence for the Elderly (LIFE):** This program is only available in Berks, Bucks, and Philadelphia Counties for people age 55 and older. For more information, call 1-800-753-8827.
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):** This program is for low-income older adults whose food usually lacks extra nutrients. Call 1-800-468-2433 or visit www.agriculture.pa.gov for more information.
- **PA Free Transit Program:** Adults over 65 age are eligible for free local bus or trolley rides during normal operation hours. In order to utilize this program, you need a Senior Citizen Transit ID Card. For more information or to obtain this card, call 717-783-8025.

Fountain Coin Fundraiser-Holiday Season Donation

When visiting the Plymouth Meeting Mall, have you ever wondered how much money is in the fountain or what happens to the coins?

The Plymouth Meeting Mall (a PREIT company) generously donated all the coins collected from July through October. Supports Coordination staff worked very hard to separate, clean, and count the coins. The total amount of money collected was \$2,149.96! This money was distributed to 43 individuals in the form of TD Bank gift cards and distributed in December, 2016.

A big thank you to the Plymouth Meeting Mall and PREIT for brightening the holiday season for so many people!

