

Community Support Journal



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May 2020

Montgomery County Community Support Program

Experiencing Homelessness During Coronavirus

By Hannah Merschen

Each of us are navigating new challenges as a result of the Coronavirus, whether it's working at home, learning to home school, or being separated from loved ones. For those experiencing homelessness, the challenges look different. How do you quarantine if you don't have a home? How do you handle the stress of a health pandemic if you don't have health insurance? Where do you go for shelter during the day when all the businesses are closed?

For the 150 people who are currently living outside in Montgomery County, this is their daily reality. Mark Boorse, Director of Program Development at Access Services recently had an opportunity to talk with Sherry, Charlie and Brian who are all navigating homelessness in Montgomery County.

(continued on page 2)



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2020 Virtual Art Contest

The CSP Committee selected this year's theme at a time when our lives have been turned upside down by COVID-19. Using our resiliency and our belief in hope and each other, we have continued to hold our monthly meetings via Zoom and turned our popular annual art contest into a virtual one.



The theme for the Virtual Art Contest is:

Life Isn't About Waiting for the Storm to Pass, It's About Learning to Dance in the Rain

Vote for your favorite art work at www.montcopacsp.org and click on "art contest" in the menu at the top of the home page.

Homelessness (continued from page 1)

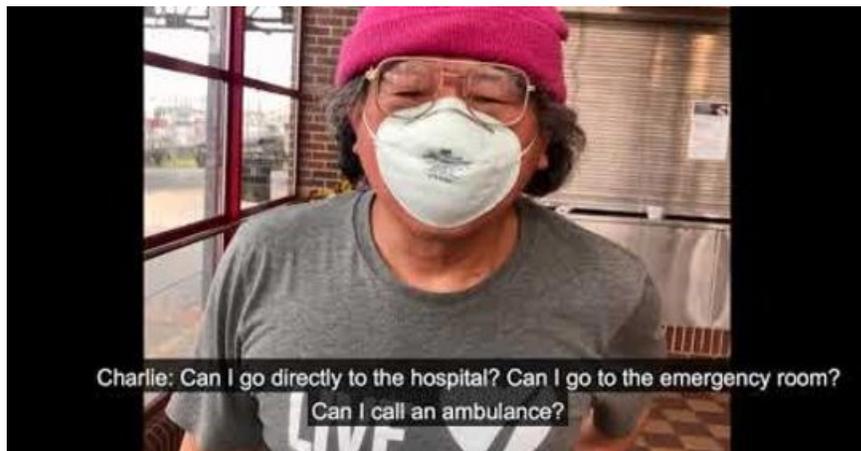
Brian has been living outside for eight months. He shared that the hardest part of the lock down has been the closure of trusted community sites. "I usually go to the library every day and read. Now I stay here all day."

Charlie has been living outside for five months. Although Charlie was aware of the symptoms of Coronavirus, he was honest that he did not know how he

would get treatment if he were sick. "I don't have a doctor. So where can I call?" He also expressed

"If I had a home, I would self-quarantine and stay in there for months. But since I have no home I have to stay on the streets." - Charlie

the challenge of being in a lockdown without a home.



Mark also had an opportunity to talk with Sherry. When he asked what her feelings were about the virus Sherry shares, "It's scary. I didn't know it was that bad until I watched it on TV...this is no joke." Thankfully, the hospitality center in Norristown is still open and able to provide access to necessities like meals, a shower, and mail.

Our Homeless Street Outreach Program continues to support those experiencing homelessness through the Coronavirus by providing essential supplies, assisting those who are most vulnerable to get into hotels, and ensuring that people are able to continue receiving meals. Thank you to our Street Outreach Team!



Contact Linda to find out how you can support Homeless Street Outreach during COVID!
Contact LWasilchick@accessservices.org



ACCESS SERVICES

Creating better ways to serve people with special needs

So then this happened...

**We asked
and you
delivered!**



From Mark Boorse's May 8th FB post:
"2 weeks ago, I asked for some help to make up sanitizing wipe kits for our friends who are homeless and can't wash their hands. And masks, so that they can protect themselves, and safely go to the places they need to in order to take care of themselves. The response has been extraordinary; We have collected 1,100 wipe kits, and 800 masks! We have given out half of the masks and about 1/3 of the wipe kits. The kits in the picture were made by young people living at the Youth Shelter; they even put encouraging messages on each kit.

Homeless Street Outreach is looking for your help!

In light of the governor's directive that people who are active in the community wear a mask and gloves to prevent the spread of COVID-19 we are looking for assistance with providing masks for homeless individuals. Our consumers are currently struggling through the resource scarcity we all are experiencing without a safe place. They continue to need to make use of community resources to meet their needs for food and warmth. Street Outreach has been attempting to meet these needs during this crisis but require all the help we can get. Masks are in short supply right now and we're asking for help from everyone to try and get masks to protect the folks we serve and help slow any community spread among an already vulnerable population.

How you can help:

If you have spare masks that you'd be willing to donate please let us know. We can work with you to try and find a place or way to get them so that we can distribute them as soon as possible. If you'd like to help in this effort please feel free to share this post, and if you'd like to donate a mask please message the page directly and we will reach out to schedule. Thank you!



**"We have collected
1,100 wipe kits,
and 800 masks!"
- Mark Boorse**

Follow on Facebook: Homeless Street Outreach or Mark Boorse



**Montgomery County CSP
Celebrates
Mental Health Awareness
Month
MAY 2020**

**It's okay to not be
okay, and please
remember, we're
all in this together.**



**Reach out for help
or to check in on
each other.**



**For more information, check out the Montgomery County
website at www.montcopa.org, especially this link
[https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/27727/
Taking-Care-of-Your-Mental-Health-Flyer-version-1docx](https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/27727/Taking-Care-of-Your-Mental-Health-Flyer-version-1docx)**

April 27, 2020

Dr. Val Arkoosh, Chair
Montgomery County Commissioners
425 Swede Street
Norristown, PA 19401

The CSP Advocacy Subcommittee raised concerns about access to psychiatric hospitals during the COVID-19 Crisis. The letters were addressed to the Montgomery County Commissioners and OMHSAS.

Re: Access to Inpatient Psychiatric Services During the COVID-19 Crisis

Dear Dr. Arkoosh:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Montgomery County CSP Committee regarding admissions to and treatment at psychiatric hospitals in the county during the COVID-19 crisis. We appreciate everything you and your board have been doing to keep our communities safe and informed as we face these unprecedented times.

It has come to the attention of our CSP Advocacy Subcommittee that some people (children and adults) seeking admission for a psychiatric crisis are being asked by the inpatient psychiatric facilities to first go to a general hospital emergency room to be tested for COVID-19. For example, one individual who went to an ER for a test had to wait there for more than a day for results to come back. Instead, the individual left the ER and was picked up by police. The psychiatric hospital admission then became involuntary instead of voluntary. Sending people who are experiencing a psychiatric crisis to emergency rooms, who are otherwise healthy, increases their risk of exposure to COVID-19 and delays access to psychiatric treatment. Montgomery County is a hotbed, and the ERs are the hottest of hotbeds! There's got to be a safer option. Is there any way the inpatient psychiatric facilities could obtain their own tests - maybe get them the 15 minute tests - and ask them to do their own testing in their parking lots?

Another problem with being diverted to an ER is the risk of exacerbating the psychiatric crisis. Someone who is going to a psychiatric facility – voluntarily or not – is at a critical point where time is extremely important. Before admission, the person must answer the regular screening questions for COVID-19 which may or may not be answered accurately by someone in the midst of a psychiatric crisis. For example:

Do you have pressure in your chest? (Likely answer is yes - they are in crisis!)

Have you been in contact with anyone with confirmed COVID-19? (Answers we've heard – “Yes, because I see people walking in my neighborhood wearing masks, which means they do have COVID-19.”)

This is not a complaint. We know the hospitals are doing the best they can, and we really appreciate their efforts to keep the patients already in their facilities safe from COVID-19. We just don't want to expose people in psychiatric crises seeking admission to more risk than is needed. These risks include increased exposure to the virus, increased psychiatric instability, and possible arrest or incarceration if the person does not get treatment when they are most vulnerable.

We appreciate your support and any assistance you can provide psychiatric hospitals in obtaining their own tests to screen for COVID-19. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Kim Renninger, Chair of the Advocacy Subcommittee
Montgomery County Community Support Program

Cc: Pam Howard, Administrator of MH/ID/EI

April 27, 2020

Phil Mader, Director
Bureau of Community and Hospital Operations
PA Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675

Re: Access to COVID-19 Testing and Protection at Norristown State Hospital

Dear Phil:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Montgomery County CSP Committee regarding testing for COVID-19 and protection and prevention practices at Norristown State Hospital.

It has come to the attention of our CSP Advocacy Subcommittee that a patient at Norristown State Hospital has died due to complications of COVID-19. We have also heard of unconfirmed reports that the state hospital has not adequately addressed the deadly virus by taking necessary precautions and testing patients and staff who may have been exposed by contact with the deceased individual or others.

Are tests for COVID-19 available at the state hospital? We realize that there is a shortage of tests and access to these tests may be difficult. For example, we have confirmed reports from Montgomery County residents that private psychiatric facilities in the county do not have tests and send people who are requesting admission to emergency rooms at general hospitals first for testing. This process delays access to psychiatric treatment and puts the person (and families) at risk for contracting COVID-19.

In addition, our committee is concerned about the state's ability to adequately protect and prevent patients and staff at the state hospital from getting the virus. What practices are in place to identify who has the virus, quarantine those who have been identified, and prevent the spread of the virus to others at the facility?

The Montgomery County Commissioners provide daily updates on the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths from the virus in the county. Does the state hospital report the number of cases and deaths due to COVID-19 to the county commissioners to include in their reports?

This is not a complaint. We know the state is taking this crisis seriously. We are concerned that some of our most vulnerable individuals residing at the state hospital, and the staff who care for them, may be facing greater risks if testing cannot be conducted at the facility.

Please let us know if testing for COVID-19 is available at Norristown State Hospital, if the number of cases and deaths from the virus are reported to Montgomery County, and what practices are in place to protect patients and staff at the facility. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Kim Renninger, Chair of the Advocacy Subcommittee
Montgomery County Community Support Program

Cc: OMHSAS Dep. Secretary Kristen Houser
Dr. Rachel Levine, PA Secretary of Health



NOVEL
CORONAVIRUS

SELF-CARE TIPS DURING COVID-19 SOCIAL DISTANCING



Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro

CONNECT.

This is a time to come together because we need each other now more than ever. Use this time to strengthen your connections with your loved ones and friends through video chats, text messages or phone calls.



DEVELOP A ROUTINE.

Creating a routine can provide us with a sense of control, which becomes essential during times of uncertainty. Routines are



different for everyone but planning meal times, a bedtime and time to be productive is a good place to start.

FIND THINGS THAT BRING YOU JOY.

Continue to do things that make you happy at home. This can also be a great time to explore new pastimes. Read a new book, enroll in an online course, experiment with cooking or start a new series. Finally attempt an activity or



project you never previously had time to do. This will keep you busy while allowing you to learn or start something new.

EAT WELL AND EXERCISE.

During these uncertain and stressful times, it might be challenging to eat or exercise as you normally would. Maintaining nutritious eating habits and continuing to exercise are essential to keeping your body happy and healthy. Some examples of appropriate exercise are yoga and running.



PRACTICE MINDFULNESS.



Mindfulness based activities such as meditation can be beneficial. Try using apps to find meditations that work for you. You can also attempt journaling to put your thoughts and feelings on paper.

LIMIT NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA.

There is a lot happening in the world and the constant reporting can create anxiety and stress. Limit the amount of news you consume and attempt to spend less time on social media.



REACH OUT.

Recognize that this is a hard time and a lot of things are out of your control. Reach out to your loved ones if you feel lonely or need a little extra love.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF.

It is important to be kind to yourself during this stressful time. Putting projects and goals on hold can be incredibly frustrating, but however you choose to spend this time is perfectly acceptable.



 **833-OAG-4YOU**
833-624-4968

 www.attorneygeneral.gov/covid19

 www.twitter.com/PAAttorneyGen
 www.facebook.com/PAAttorneyGen
 www.instagram.com/PAAttorneyGen

From Erin Hewitt:

Below is the weekly MontCo resource update from May 20, 2020. Please stay connected with one another during this time and please take care of yourselves!

COVID-19 Educational Resources

Visit Montgomery County's [COVID-19 Data Hub](#) & [Office of Public Health](#) websites for accurate local information

Drive through testing site at the Central Campus of the Montgomery County Community College in Whitpain Township. This site will provide self-swab COVID-19 testing, by appointment only. To view a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services instructional video about self-swab testing, visit [here](#).

o COVID-19 Help Line that can be reached at **610-631-3000** between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily.

Visit the [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#) & [CDC](#) websites for accurate statewide and national information

Let the community know your needs via [PA Link's Provider Survey](#) and/or the [Tri-County Area Chamber of Commerce website](#)

o *The Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Center for Community Resources (CCR) created a new Statewide Support & Referral Helpline. It is available 24/7 to respond to those struggling with anxiety and emotions due to the COVID-19 emergency. **The Mental Health Support Line/Warm line** can be reached toll-free, 24/7 at **1-855-284-2494** from anywhere in PA.*

• *SAMHSA is providing regular updates via a new consolidated COVID-19 page: [samhsa.gov/coronavirus](https://www.samhsa.gov/coronavirus). SAMHSA also has a list of resources for Training and Technical Assistance Related to COVID-19. Please visit [here](#).*

- o Disaster Distress Helpline: **1-800-985-5990** or text "*TalkWithUs*" to **66746**. For more information please visit [here](#).
- *DDAP (Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs) is providing updates as well: [visit here](#).*
- o **PA GET HELP NOW 1-800-662-HELP (4357)**
- *5-County SEPA region information for school meals during closures, please [Click here](#)*
- *PA Parent and Family Alliance has been working hard to put together some useful resources for families and providers across the state. These resources include education, mental wellness, work, necessary services, art, relaxation and much more and we have more to add. Please visit their site by clicking [here](#).*
- *DHS has a website/link for daycares open for essential employees during this time: [visit here](#).*
- *Children's Book on COVID-19: [click here](#).*
- *Please find attached information (member support document) regarding *Safe Link* and other resources to **address cellular phone usage** during the COVID-19.*
- *Senator Casey Resource Hub- Includes unemployment, taxes, housing/food assistance, and more [here](#).*

- *National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Guide- Advocacy, safety, self-care, and more [here](#).*
- COVID-19 Resources for Social Workers- Free online trainings and resources by population [here](#).
- *MontCo Veterans Helpline- flyer is attached! 610-213-4022*
- *“Self-Care Tips during COVID-10 Social Distancing” by Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro. Please see attached!*
- DHS has started accepting applications for its new Emergency Assistance Program. This is a **cash assistance program** for folks who lost income during the COVID-19 crisis. This program will run until June 12 or until all the money is spent. Please see attached flyer and share this information far and wide!

Virtual Resources & Available Essential Services

Creating Increased Connections Mutual Aid Groups are now online – [click here to join!](#)

o *CIC* has also added a “**Friday Fun Day**” virtual event!

NAMI Montco is offering virtual Recovery Support Groups, Family Support Groups, and Wellness Chats – [learn more here](#)

Virtual Alt2Su Groups (via *Western Mass RLC*)- please click [here](#) !

Hearing Voices USA is offering online groups [here](#)

Locate online [Alcoholics Anonymous](#), [Narcotics Anonymous](#) , and other [Recovery Groups](#)

Unsuicide has a comprehensive list of suicide prevention [instant messaging, chatrooms, and forums](#)

Adult, Youth, and CPS Virtual Drop Ins provided by *PMHCA, Youth Move PA, and PaPSC*. [Please visit here for more information.](#)

Follow [Magellan Behavioral Health’s Provider Announcements](#) page for daily COVID-19 provider updates.

Find food resources on the [Montco Anti-Hunger Network Map](#) and the [Montco Hunger Solutions Emergency Food Map](#)

Review resources for unemployment compensation, financial help, and more [here](#) (be sure to scroll down)

A list of low-cost and free web-based tools and resources for non-profits are available [here](#)

Youth MOVE Resources - Peer Resources to Manage Social Distancing visit [here](#).

Community Advocates of Montgomery County- offering a virtual Forensic Peer Support group. [Click here](#) for more information!

- *The Center for Loss and Bereavement*- offering appointments and support groups via Telehealth. [Visit here](#) for more information or call **610-222-4110**.
- *Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol*- please see attachment! Naloxone, treatment services, etc.
- *NAMI of Montgomery County HELPLINE* available from Monday-Friday from 9 am- 3 pm. **215-361-7784**
- *MontCo. CSP 2020 virtual Poster Art Contest* is currently taking place! Please enter by visiting www.montcopacsp.org – and click “Art Contest” in menu at top of page!
- *Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Greater Philadelphia* have resources available: [please visit here.](#)
- *Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research (ACR)* webinars, tip sheets, and resources for Young Adults.
 - Webinars: [visit here.](#)
 - Resources: [visit here.](#)
 - Tip sheet: [visit here.](#)
- *Montgomery County Hearing Voices Network*: virtual groups are now available! Flyer is attached!
- “*A Beautiful Day Tomorrow: Taking Suicide Awareness on the Road*” is now available on



Let's make sure everyone is counted in the 2020 Census!

Become a Census Champion!

10 minutes to answer 9 questions that will shape your community for **years**

- Make a commitment **now** to participate in the 2020 Census.
- Educate your friends and family on why it's so important to be counted.
- Get involved! Visit www.montcopa.org/Census2020 for more information.

What's at stake?
Funding for:
 Schools,
 Infrastructure,
 Hospitals, Education,
 Medicaid, SNAP,
 Housing, Senior Services,
 Transportation,
 Public Health






FROM VOTESPA.COM

On March 27, Governor Wolf signed Senate Bill 422, which reschedules Pennsylvania's primary election from April 28 to June 2 due to the COVID-19 emergency. Voters have the option to vote by mail-in ballot rather than going to their polling place on election day. Mail-in ballot applications will be accepted through Tuesday, May 26, 2020. If a voter has already applied for an absentee or mail-in ballot, they do NOT need to reapply.



Voting by Mail-in Ballot Deadlines for the June 2 Primary Election:

- **5 pm May 26** - APPLICATIONS must be RECEIVED by your county election office
- **8 pm June 2** - VOTED BALLOTS must be RECEIVED by your county election office - postmarks are not enough

Applications and ballots may be delivered to your [county election office](#) by the deadline. Contact your [county election office](#) for their hours of operation.

Please see two sample ballots from Norristown 4-1 on the following pages. To find your voting information go to:

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx>

VOTE

Ballot ID: 1664
 Norristown 4-1
 130401

Official Democratic Ballot
 County of Montgomery, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 General Primary, Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Instructions to the Voter:

1. TO VOTE YOU MUST COMPLETELY BLACKEN THE OVAL TO THE RIGHT OF YOUR CHOICE. An oval darkened to the right of any candidate indicates a vote for that candidate.
2. To cast a write-in vote for a person whose name is not on the ballot, you must darken the oval to the right of the line provided and print the name in the blank space provided for that purpose.
3. Use only a black pen or marker.
4. If you make a mistake, **DO NOT ERASE**. Ask for a new ballot.

President of the United States (Vote for One)	Delegate to the Democratic National Convention 4th District (Vote for Not More Than Ten)
BERNIE SANDERS <input type="radio"/>	
JOSEPH R BIDEN <input type="radio"/>	WILLIAM SWARTZ <input type="radio"/>
TULSI GABBARD <input type="radio"/>	RHEA TRAINSON <input type="radio"/>
Write-in <input type="radio"/>	VINCENT MANUELE <input type="radio"/>
Attorney General (Vote for One)	RON AMCHIN <input type="radio"/>
JOSH SHAPIRO <input type="radio"/>	DAVID MCMAHON <input type="radio"/>
Write-in <input type="radio"/>	SUE CASKEY <input type="radio"/>
Auditor General (Vote for One)	MATT BRADFORD <input type="radio"/>
H SCOTT CONKLIN <input type="radio"/>	KIARRA COLEY <input type="radio"/>
MICHAEL LAMB <input type="radio"/>	CARLTON STUART <input type="radio"/>
TRACIE FOUNTAIN <input type="radio"/>	ALEXANDRIA KHALIL <input type="radio"/>
ROSE ROSIE MARIE DAVIS <input type="radio"/>	AYANNA LANEY-MARTIN <input type="radio"/>
NINA AHMAD <input type="radio"/>	SALEEMA LOVELACE <input type="radio"/>
CHRISTINA M HARTMAN <input type="radio"/>	EDITH WEINSTEIN <input type="radio"/>
Write-in <input type="radio"/>	WILLIAM S LEOPOLD <input type="radio"/>
State Treasurer (Vote for One)	ADOLPH REED <input type="radio"/>
JOE TORSELLA <input type="radio"/>	TIM BRIGGS <input type="radio"/>
Write-in <input type="radio"/>	OBED ARANGO <input type="radio"/>
Representative in Congress 4th District (Vote for One)	Write-in <input type="radio"/>
MADLEINE DEAN <input type="radio"/>	Write-in <input type="radio"/>
Write-in <input type="radio"/>	Write-in <input type="radio"/>
Senator in the General Assembly 17th District (Vote for One)	Write-in <input type="radio"/>
DAYLIN LEACH <input type="radio"/>	Write-in <input type="radio"/>
AMANDA M Cappelletti <input type="radio"/>	Alternate Delegate to the Democratic National Convention 4th District (Vote for One)
Write-in <input type="radio"/>	SANDRA WATERS <input type="radio"/>
Representative in the General Assembly 70th District (Vote for One)	Write-in <input type="radio"/>
MATT BRADFORD <input type="radio"/>	
Write-in <input type="radio"/>	

Ballot ID: 1688
 Norristown 4-1
 130401

Official Republican Ballot
 County of Montgomery, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 General Primary, Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Instructions to the Voter:

1. TO VOTE YOU MUST COMPLETELY BLACKEN THE OVAL TO THE RIGHT OF YOUR CHOICE. An oval darkened to the right of any candidate indicates a vote for that candidate.
2. To cast a write-in vote for a person whose name is not on the ballot, you must darken the oval to the right of the line provided and print the name in the blank space provided for that purpose.
3. Use only a black pen or marker.
4. If you make a mistake, DO NOT ERASE. Ask for a new ballot.

President of the United States (Vote for One)	Alternate Delegate to the Republican National Convention 4th District (Vote for Not More Than Three)
DONALD J TRUMP <input type="checkbox"/>	
ROQUE ROCKY DE LA FUENTE <input type="checkbox"/>	
BILL WELD <input type="checkbox"/>	RALPH GRASSO <input type="checkbox"/>
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	BARBARA A BUSTARD <input type="checkbox"/>
Attorney General (Vote for One)	PAM LEVY <input type="checkbox"/>
HEATHER HEIDELBAUGH <input type="checkbox"/>	Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>
Auditor General (Vote for One)	
TIMOTHY DEFOOR <input type="checkbox"/>	
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	
State Treasurer (Vote for One)	
STACY L GARRITY <input type="checkbox"/>	
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	
Representative in Congress 4th District (Vote for One)	
KATHY BARNETTE <input type="checkbox"/>	
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	
Senator in the General Assembly 17th District (Vote for One)	
ELLEN FISHER <input type="checkbox"/>	
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	
Representative in the General Assembly 70th District (Vote for One)	
JIM SARING <input type="checkbox"/>	
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	
Delegate to the Republican National Convention 4th District (Vote for Not More Than Three)	
STAN CASACIO <input type="checkbox"/>	
DOUG HAGER <input type="checkbox"/>	
ANN MARSHALL PILGREEN <input type="checkbox"/>	
TOM ELLIS <input type="checkbox"/>	
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	
Write-in <input type="checkbox"/>	

CSP meetings go virtual! Check out what happened in April

Minutes by Sue Shannon

Abby welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained how the Zoom meeting would work.

LeeAnn Moyer reported about the Reinvestment Program, which is money that can be reinvested into the behavioral health system. Over the last 10 years, 40 million dollars has been reinvested to benefit people, including housing, more than 10million dollars, and brought new Evidence Based Practices, including peer support, and to expand outpatient services and for supportive services, like the Critical Time Intervention for people who are homeless. The new Recovery Center in Norristown was funded through reinvestment, as well as the respite centers. A new drug and alcohol intervention center is being planned. Telehealth is another effort that is being funded by reinvestment dollars – this has become important now during this pandemic, as providers have been supporting people during this shutdown. This funding is helping providers get the equipment that they need.

Questions: How are we supporting transition from the prison system with reinvestment dollars, and how are we measuring success?

When a reinvestment plan is made, data is identified to measure the success of the goals of the program. They work with the provider to monitor the success of the goals and to make adjustments as needed to the program. For people transitioning from the justice system, the reinvestment dollars supported the **Justice Related Case Management** that has been developed. Also, related to telehealth, we are working through a **Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant that Family Services acquired** on the planning phase of implementing telehealth technology to do provider intakes with people while they're still in jail, so that they feel connected to services as they are leaving the jail. As this crisis has hit, Pam Howard reported that LeeAnn Moyer began working with OMHSAS right away to implement telehealth, and Pam wants to work towards not going backwards from that telehealth connection. LeeAnn said she has been working with others behind the scenes to adjust regulations so that telehealth can be implemented.

Question: How are reinvestment dollars supporting transition age people? Telehealth is one way that is being looked at for supporting transition age people. TrailGuides and the TIP program are also programs that were started with reinvestment dollars. The MyLife program, as soon as the pandemic hit, began thinking of ways to continue online.

LeeAnn and Pam both encouraged transition age people and everyone to use their voices, at MYLife and at this committee to advocate for services that work best for them.

Agenda questions for discussion with guests

Pam Howard and Vera Zanders:

People shared that establishing a routine, working, and especially using online meeting resources have been helpful.

There was a discussion about telehealth and what parts of it is good and we should keep. People felt that there needs to be a middle ground – the flexibility of telehealth is good, but sometimes you need to be in the room. The middle ground needs to be defined by each individual, though. One person's middle ground is not going to be another person's middle ground. Telehealth can be helpful in overcoming transportation barriers.

- * **What are you finding helpful during social distancing?**
- * **What has been your experience accessing telehealth?**
- * **What obstacles or unmet needs do you have?**

Mike Nelson shared that on Fridays CIC is doing an online Funday Friday, where people can come and just get away from it. The two way street of peer support is great – people are supporting each other. The CIC groups have been very helpful in helping people connect.

LeeAnn asked a question which has arisen at the state: Has there been any issues around people being present in a group, **online**, or in the background of someone online, which compromises **privacy and confidentiality**?

The feedback was that it has been thought about, when you're in your home environment you know other people in your home can hear you. This is an issue with telehealth as well. We definitely need to look at this, and establish best practices, because the concerns around physical distancing are going to continue for a long time. But, hopefully people who can participate in the comfort of their home, will want to participate in in person groups when they are available again.

Training for people who are doing telehealth and online trainings and groups is important.

Facebook groups can be helpful, in terms of providing support in a more flexible way, that you can pop in and out of instead of adding an online meeting to the day.

Are there ways for providers to engage with people who are reluctant to engage in telehealth? Suggestion was that providers can give an opportunity for people to chat with a therapist or other provider to talk about how online support could work for that individual.

Discussion about **access to technology** – there has always been a gap with some people who do not have internet access or phone minutes, and this situation can be an opportunity to look at how we can get access to more people. This could be something to advocate for with legislators.

In terms of privacy, there was a suggestion that people can use their car as a phone booth if needed.

Group home privacy and access challenges: Group homes in particular seem to, in this situation, have challenges around privacy and access, was feedback.

Vera let everyone know that providers can contact the county about getting appropriate equipment.

In addition to technological barriers, language, generational perspective, and living situations.

Pam asked if there was any message about mental health that the commissioners should be giving during their press conference.

People said that everyone should know that feelings are normal, that you can be angry sometimes and hopeful sometimes and that's alright. This crisis shows how everyone experiences crisis and reacts, and it is important for us to reach out for support when we need it.

- April 16, 2020
CSP Zoom Meeting

Community Advocates of Montgomery County

**present a new, online
Forensic Peer Support group
based on our It's T.I.M.E. class**

WHAT IS IT? A new, online peer support group for men and women with mental health and/or drug and alcohol and criminal justice involvement

WHEN: Every Wednesday beginning April 1, 2020

TIME: 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.

HOW DO I JOIN?

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/593824407>

One tap mobile: +16465588656,,593824407# US (New York)

Dial by your location: +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 593 824 407

Hosted by:

Vernon Steed, Forensic Advocate

Phone: 610-331-1313 ~ Email: vsted@hopeworxinc.org

For technical issues, contact Kim Renninger

Phone: 484-686-2390 ~ Email: krenninger@hopeworxinc.org





Spring 2020 Mental Health Planning Council Meetings Remote Access Information

Committee Meetings: May 27, 2020						
Committee	Time	Meeting ID	Webex Link	Web Password	Phone Number	Phone Password
Persons-in-Recovery	8:30-9:45am	625 564 608	https://meetingsamer7.webex.com/meetingsamer7/j.php?MTID=m0dbd3d536dd2037b279caa84a6849958	yB7HxgppJ76	1-408-418-9388	92749477
Children's Committee	10am-12pm	623 491 243	https://meetingsamer9.webex.com/webapp/sites/meetingsamer9/meeting/download/9c6b434630284ad0bf2e3fe43626260c?siteurl=meetingsamer9&MTID=m879c7367e45eeca20478a08da1520e10	Childrens	1-408-418-9388	24453736
Adult Committee	10am-12pm	629 885 545	https://meetingsamer9.webex.com/meetingsamer9/j.php?MTID=mebed3438b91bdcfeab85a7aa73cade0	nK9tH6tW7gG	1-408-418-9388	65984689
Older Adult Committee	10am-12pm	621 797 234	https://meetingsamer10.webex.com/meetingsamer10/j.php?MTID=m8152a85fc4ae8d26bf364dbcbb1c73c3	xxauU6cwq38	1-408-418-9388	99288629
Joint Session: June 16, 2020						
Joint Session	9am-11am	Emailed with registration	https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3807770801464117006	Emailed with registration	Emailed with registration	Emailed with registration

Note: Webex is being use for the committee meetings and does not require you to pre-register or create an account. Gotowebinar is being used for the joint session to allow for more participants and does require attendees to register in advance of the meeting. It is recommended that you log in 10 minutes before the meeting starts if you haven't the platforms on your device previously.

SAVE THE DATE! Tentative dates for the Mental Health Planning Council (MHPC) SFY20-21 Quarterly meetings are listed below. When finalized, dates will be announced on the MHPC Listserv, the OMHSAS Public Listserv, and posted on the Mental Health in PA Website: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Mental-Health-In-PA/Pages/Mental-Health-Planning-Council.aspx>

Schedule:

Tuesday August 25, 2020: 10AM-3PM

Tuesday December 8, 2020: 10AM-3PM

Tuesday February 23, 2021: 10AM-3PM

Tuesday May 18, 2021: 10AM-3PM

Location Central Penn College: <http://www.centralpenn.edu/>

Address: 600 Valley Road, Summerdale, PA 17093

Contact Any questions related to the Mental Health Planning Council can be sent to the MHPC Email Address: RA-PWOMHSASMHPC@pa.gov



NAMIWalks is going to be a little different this year. We're not canceling it – we wouldn't think of it when our collective mental health needs are at their greatest. NAMI's programs and advocacy are needed more than ever, and with your help, we are pleased to present a walk for our times, **NAMIWalks Your Way Greater Philadelphia: A Virtual Event** on May 30.

What is NAMIWalks Your Way?

On May 30, NAMIWalks will be a virtual experience and joined by NAMIWalks across the country. NAMI-Walks Your Way means what it sounds like: participants get to make NAMIWalks their own. You can walk a 5K—through your neighborhood, around your backyard, on your treadmill. Or you can do something else meaningful and fun to celebrate our virtual walk day.

What participants are doing on May 30:

- Walking 3,500 steps for a *5K their way*
- Planning a craft day with their kids
- Holding a virtual bake-off with their team
- Practicing self-care with a favorite hobby: yoga, gardening, knitting
- Doing a 5K on the treadmill or stationary bike
- Hosting a virtual paint and sip party

Take photos and videos and share your activity on a favorite social media with the link to your walk fundraising page and the hashtag **#NotAlone** and **#MentalHealthForAll**. Together we can make May 30 a day to remember - *Mental Health for All: A National Day of Hope*.

The only limit of NAMIWalks Your Way is the reach of your imagination and the breadth of your compassion. Share your ideas with us!

CSP Subcommittee Reports for March/April

Advocacy Subcommittee: The committee held a Zoom meeting on April 13th. Kim Renninger said there is concern about the of the number of cases of COVID-19 at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility, adding that they were letting some people out to the streets. Elizabeth Doan asked if there were housing vouchers in the county similar to Chester County who has been proactive in providing vouchers to people that need them. The committee decided to contact Montgomery County and Your Way Home about the issue.

Also, Kim and Kathy Laws raised concerns about how psychiatric hospitals in the county, including the Norristown State Hospital, are handling the COVID-19 emergency. Questions included: Do the county case numbers reflect the number of cases inside NSH and private psychiatric hospitals? Why do some psychiatric hospitals make people prove they don't have the virus before admitting them? This includes making a person go to an ER to be tested and wait for the results before being admitted to the psychiatric hospital. Committee members were concerned about the effects of delayed or no access to hospitals during the crisis. The committee will write letters to the county and the state requesting that tests be available at all hospitals so that admissions are not delayed or denied.

CSP MEETING CALENDER 2020

*Meetings are held every third
Thursday, monthly @
Norristown Public Library from
12: 00-2:30pm*

The next meeting will be:

May	21
June	18
July	16

Social Subcommittee: The committee decided to hold a Virtual Art Contest due to the COVID-19 emergency. They will ask CSP members to vote on the following three themes: 1. Strength for Today. Hope for Tomorrow 2. Life Isn't About Waiting for the Storm to Pass. It's About Learning to Dance in the Rain. 3. Make Each Day a Masterpiece. The results will be announced at April's virtual CSP meeting on April 16 from 1-2:30 p.m.

Conference Subcommittee: Erin Hewitt said the committee has been meeting weekly. It was decided to postpone the CSP Conference with the hope of holding it in the fall or as soon as it is safe to. We will still host virtual Mental Health Awards throughout the month of May for Mental Health Awareness Month. The CSP Art Contest will still be taking place in May and will be displayed online.

Montgomery County CSP Executive Committee

2019/2020 Co-Chairs

Provider Member: Abby Grasso, Executive Director of NAMI

Person in Recovery: Paige Jellison

Family Member: Anise Robinson

2019/2020 Sub-Committee Chairs

Social/Media: Amalthea Leland, Karleen Caparro

Advocacy: Kim Renninger, Joyce Snyder

Conference: Penny Johnson, Erin Hewitt

2019/2020 Treasurer

Morgan Killian-Moseley, CST Specialist

Fiduciary

HopeWorx, Inc.

ABOUT CSP

CSP Principles

- * **Consumer Centered/
Consumer Empowered**
- * **Culturally competent**
- * **Able to Meet Special
Needs**
- * **Community Based with
Natural Supports**
- * **Flexible**
- * **Coordinated**
- * **Accountable**
- * **Strength Based**

**Join our
Mailing list!**

We have an e-mail list as well as a regular mailing, to join:

Send an e-mail to:

amalcolm@hopeworxinc.org

Or send your contact info to the mailing address below

Meetings:

12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

***3rd Thursday
of each month***

Norristown

Public Library Community Room

1001 Powell St.

(at Swede St.)

Kathie Mitchell, Newsletter Editor

**Montgomery County Community
Support Program (CSP)**

1210 Stanbridge Street,
Suite 600
Norristown, PA 19401
610-270-3685

Website: www.montcopacsp.org

Mission Statement:

Montgomery County's Community Support Program (CSP) brings together individuals that receive mental health services, their family members, providers and the Department of Behavioral Health in an equal partnership to promote recovery and excellence in the delivery of community-based mental health services.

The committee strives to include a balance of people who use services, people who provide services, family members, and interested members of the community at large.

The CSP initiatives continue to grow state, regionally and county wide. As the involvement increases CSP has become a place that feedback can truly be given to the county from individuals that receive services and information can be given that suits the needs and requests of those that attend.

CSP Subcommittees:

- * **Advocacy Subcommittee**—Works on legislative, policy, communication, budget, voter education and other issues related to mental health services in the county, statewide and at the federal level when relevant. At the direction of the CSP Committee, the Advocacy Subcommittee gathers information on issues, plans advocacy events and creates a monthly newsletter to provide information to the stakeholder network as well as the community at large about the work of CSP. The newsletter also provides updates on new and changing mental health services provided in Montgomery County.
- * **Social/Media Subcommittee**—Works on facilitating opportunities for people in the CSP community to be more involved in the Montgomery County community. This includes implementing the Community Connections grants, which provide funding for people to participate in a variety of activities. The committee also implements transportation grants that provide gas cards and SEPTA day passes to CSP community members. The annual CSP Poster Art contest is also organized by this committee.
- * **Conference Sub-committee** – The conference subcommittee will plan and fundraise for the annual Montgomery County CSP Conference.
- * **Newsletter Subcommittee**—The newsletter subcommittee works to provide information to the public about CSP and mental health advocacy. The newsletter subcommittee is committed CSP recovery principles which is person centered and empowered by stakeholders. Our goal is to provide information through various media avenue and to create a quality newsletter that includes but is not limited to, legislative advocacy, events, services, personal recovery stories and creative writing such as poems. Please feel free to submit articles and stories to enrich our newsletter. Send to the editor: kathiemitchell8221@gmail.com.

Organizations who regularly send representatives to CSP:

Montgomery Co. Department of Behavioral Health
Central Behavioral Health
Consumer Satisfaction Team of Montgomery County
NAMI Montgomery County
Mental Health Assoc. of Southeastern PA
Salisbury Behavioral Health
Magellan Health Services
Resources for Human Development
Community Advocates of Montgomery Co.
Montgomery County Emergency Services (MCES)
Hedwig House

We invite all peers, family members and providers/professionals to attend.



If you can't attend the monthly CSP meetings but would like to give your feedback on topics we discuss, please email us at amalcolm@hopeworxinc.org