

Positive Behavioral Health Experiences and Connections in April and May Reduce Stigma – Now Let's Do More

A message from Jim Leonard, CEO, Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania, Inc.

April is recognized as Autism Acceptance Month and May is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month. Both months offer the behavioral health community a chance to proactively engage with the public through a variety of community events and public awareness campaigns to help to reduce stigma. Magellan and our county partners both created and participated in many community engagement activities over the past few months that enabled us to develop new relationships with local stakeholders. The positive experiences and stories we heard regarding those receiving treatment for a behavioral health diagnosis revealed strengths of character and resiliency from current Medicaid members, former Medicaid members, and non-Medicaid members. For myself, and I believe the vast majority of us, hearing from a past HealthChoices Program member to learn about their success within the Program and then as they move on with their lives is truly impactful, and in many cases quite moving and emotional. ***Personally, I am motivated to share more individual success stories created as a result of Medicaid and the PA HealthChoices Program, and I hope that you are as well.***

Behavioral Health Recent Highlights and Important Messaging

- [Recovery Diaries](#) – Storytelling and Podcasts from Medicaid and Non-Medicaid Members
- “[Listen Up: Autistic Youth Need to Be Heard](#),” written by Jace Pooley, a high-school student in the Lehigh Valley and a former HealthChoices Program member
- [Behavioral Health Matters Podcast](#) – Magellan Podcast
- [1st Annual Autism Community Walk](#) was in Bethlehem
- [Community Help Center](#) recently opened in Johnstown
- [Bucks County Suicide Prevention Task Force](#) hosted their annual *Hold on You Matter Walk* and [produced coloring books](#)
- [Montgomery County Community Support Program \(CSP\)](#) hosted their *12th Annual CSP conference/47th Annual Mental Health Awards Reception*



Outreach opportunities for providers and stakeholders

We encourage all providers and stakeholders to get engaged in the advocacy around the importance of Medicaid and our HealthChoices Program. Here are two outreach opportunities to consider:

- Contact the [U.S. Senate](#) and [U.S. House of Representatives](#) to share impactful examples and personal stories of support for Medicaid and our HealthChoices Program in Pennsylvania.