



COMMUNITY HEALTH CHOICES UPDATE

What You Need to Know about the Statewide Transition Plan

Below are the most recent updates with the Managed Care transition.

On December 15, 2016, the Department of Human Services (DHS) announced they are postponing the implementation of Community HealthChoices (CHC) due to delays associated with the resolution of several bid protests.

- Phase 1 will now begin in January 2018 in the Southwest region of the state
- Phase 2 will now begin in July 2018 in the Southeast region of the state
- The January 2019 start date for the rest of the state remains unchanged

According to the announcement, the Commonwealth's goals for the Managed Care Organizations will be to increase the focus on greater coordination between physical and behavioral health systems. CHC will:

- Enhance opportunities for community-based services and increase access to services;
- Strengthen health care and waiver service delivery systems;
- Allow for new innovations;
- Promote the health, safety and well-being of enrolled participants; and
- Ensure transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of the program.

PA announced the selection of the managed care organizations (MCOs) in October that would deliver health care coverage in CHC. That selection was protested and thus the progress of critical components of CHC implementation was delayed and DHS has been unable to move forward with the current established start dates. Some of the impacted activities include:

- Developing an adequate network
- Completing a readiness review
- Communicating

For more information, visit www.dhs.pa.gov.

COMMON QUESTIONS

1. Do participants need to do anything now to prepare for Managed Care?

Not at this time. Due to MCO selection being protested, the CHC implementation date was delayed. Your Service Coordinator will make you aware in advance when your region will transition in order to assist with a smooth transition and allow you to make the choice of MCO. However, we do encourage you to check out the DHS website and learn more about CHC.

2. I am under 21 and in the Independence waiver. Will I still be receiving my State Plan and waiver services?

Those participants under 21 will be transitioned to the OBRA waiver to continue to receive waiver services. The start date for the CHC waiver will be their 21st birthday.

HEALTHY TIPS

Stress & Depression: Tips for coping – THE 4 A's

Just as it is for physical health so it is for mental health...an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place.

- **Avoid** - Take control of your surroundings. It's okay to avoid people who bother you. Give yourself permission to say no & ditch part of your "to do" list (prioritize).
- **Alter** - Respectfully ask others to change their behavior by communicating your feelings openly. Choose to manage your time & state limits in advance.
- **Accept** - Talk with someone to help separate feelings from events. Forgive when possible and consider it a learning opportunity so you can plan differently. Practice positive self-talk (say nice things to yourself about yourself). You can choose your mood.
- **Adapt** - Adjust your standards to the situation. Practice thought stopping – think about it later when you can choose the time to reflect (keeps you in control) & look at the big picture.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PA ABLE Savings Program

The Pennsylvania Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (PA ABLE), which was passed by the General Assembly on April 13, will provide families with a savings account without jeopardizing eligibility for important programs that their loved ones depend on.

PA ABLE savings account benefits may include:

- Save up to \$14,000 each year
- Savings grow tax-free
- Use account to pay for a wide range of disability-related expenses
- Withdrawals will be exempt from federal and state income tax when used for qualified disability expenses
- Accounts would be exempt from inheritance tax
- ABLE savings are excluded from eligibility determinations for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits (savings up to \$100,000), other means-tested federal programs, Medical Assistance, and other state means-tested disability and health benefits

The PA ABLE Act will authorize the Pennsylvania Treasury Department to create the PA ABLE Savings Program, and Treasury has already begun to plan for implementing the Act. If you are interested in receiving updates about PA ABLE and/or opening an ABLE account when the program is available, please [click here](#) or visit <http://pa529.com/able.html> to sign up.

For faster and more efficient communication, please send your email to us at:

ADVOCATE@udservices.org