

CAC Meeting Notes for 9/14/23

Attendees:

Aimee Burns	Cali Olson	Lyn Frieda
Amanda Turner	Chelsea Margic	Madra Furman
Amy Somers	Craig Schield	Melissa Kinser
Andrew Wagner	Jacki Thornton	Nicole Fisher
Beth Hilyer	Janice Werfel	Sherri Hack
Beth Longwell	Jennifer Horst	
Beth Wineland	Johnna Casale	

Andy Wagner opened the meeting. Craig has asked that people let Lyn know who was participating.

Andy introduced Amie Burns, the Executive Director of NAMI. NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Amie then shared a Powerpoint describing her organization and its mission. NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization, dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. They are located in Altoona and just moved to 1809 11th St, Altoona.

Amie shared that mental illness diagnoses are not visible disabilities. NAMI was founded in 1979 by two families who had children with a mental illness, for the purposes of addressing the stigma around mental illness. NAMI has many hard-working volunteers who provide information, advocacy, and help people and their loved ones. NAMI has over 600 offices now. Their structure is made up of members, volunteers, education leaders, governing board members, and friends of NAMI.

Statistics show that in Pennsylvania, 1.8 million adults have a mental health condition; more than 6 times the popular of Pittsburgh. Most recent studies indicate a 1 in 4 instance since Covid, and of those 1 in 4 people with a mental illness are arrested due to lack of understanding (mental breakdown) by law enforcement. NAMI is trying to make law enforcement more knowledgeable (treatment v. handcuffs). Seven in 10 youths end up in juvenile system for same reason. "Post-pandemic pandemic" is a term being used to describe the current rate of mental illness. Many can't afford to get care.

Many people with a mental illness die by suicide. Mental health has a ripple effect on others. Many can't afford their meds or services, so then the family becomes caregiver, spending an average of 32 hours per week trying to care for them. This leads the family member to depression and anxiety due to the overload and overflow of the repercussions.

NAMI supports persons affected by mental illness and those who care about them. NAMI has programs to support all of these people: Family To Family course; Peer To Peer course; Family Support Groups, NAMI Connection Recovery Peer Support, Ending The Silence presentation; "In Our Own Voice" presentation. Also, the New Ag of Sept 2023 starts next Friday, "The Power of Creativity

for Children's and Families' Mental Health" to help families reconnect and talk to each other about how they're feeling.

Amie then mentioned 988: Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. They are available 24/7. You can call or text, or you can also chat online at 988lifeline.org. You may also book an appointment by going to namiblaircountypa.org. If you are unable to go to their web site, you can call 814-327-7083 to book an appointment.

Andy commented that his was great information to have on hand when seeing and dealing with our customers, and he asked if anyone had questions. He asked if Amie could share her presentation, and she will send to Andy. When he receives that, he will share with the staff.

Andy then gave BBVS updates: Summer Academy was just completed. It was brought back after a couple years and took place at Penn State Main. The feedback was very positive, and many maintain contact. Andy advised that future locations for Summer Academy will not necessarily be at Penn State.

There will be no Strive On program this fall, but there will be communication going forward regarding a program that may replace Strive On.

There will be an NDEAM event at Altoona on October 11th from 9:00 to 12:00 and anyone is welcome. We will talk about our services and refreshment will be provided. Please let others know about this event.

Regarding our staffing, Beth Longwell and Chelsea Margic are now permanent and have been assigned their counties, giving us now 3 counselors. We are still in the process of filling the O&M Specialist position, so if you know of anyone qualified who is interested, please have them contact our office. We are also in the process of interviewing for the ADA position in our Altoona office. Interviews are being conducted this week and next week.

Andy apologized for any inconvenience due to the scheduling issue in August and advised that our next CAC meeting is to be November 2nd. The plan is to still offer hybrid attendance.

Andy then turned it over to Craig.

Craig gave the following updates: He said that the Summer My Work Program was very successful, and he complimented the staff for their work. The students enjoyed themselves and learned a lot.

Two counselors who have vacated their positions, so they are in the process of hiring new counselors to fill those position. Postings will go out soon. They will also be hiring two CA2s, to be posted soon. Additionally, the ADA position needs to be filled, and anticipate that position to be posted soon.

Craig shared that Bedford CareerLink, which has been in the same location for more than 20 years, will be temporarily relocating to the Bedford County Technology Center, likely during the third week of October, with plans to re-open on October 23rd. This location is anticipated to last only through April, then moving to different location. A permanent location is being discussed.

Craig then turned the meeting over to Missy Kinser.

Missy listed numerous events taking place in October: NDEAM will have a job fair on October 4th from 10:00 – 2:00. A Job Club prep session with Madra Furman will be on October 3rd at 1:30; October 10th will be the Virtual Job Club at 1:30; October 11th will be the open house, as

mentioned by Andy, from 9:00 to 12:00; October 11th will be the Centre County Job Fair from 1:00 – 4:00, October 25th will be the Fulton County Job Fair from 9:00 – 2:30.

The meeting was then turned back over to Andy. Andy asked if anyone had questions and advised that the next meeting is November 2nd. A link will be sent for that meeting.

Hearing no other questions, Andy closed the meeting.