

## **PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE**

### **Mental Health and Community Assistance**

**August 5, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.**  
**Geisinger Behavioral Health Center**  
**Danville, PA**

#### **Remarks - Laura Herman, Mental Health Supervisor, Northumberland County BHIDS**

Northumberland and surrounding counties are fortunate to have a multitude of providers for Mental Health Services within our region. These include Crisis Intervention, Outpatient Therapy, Psychiatry, Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Workabilities Clubhouse, Drop in Centers, Family Based Therapy, School Based Behavioral Health (SBBH), Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS), Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST), and Partial Hospitalization. These services have been beneficial to many individuals and families seeking support for their Mental Health. Additionally, Inpatient Psychiatric Hospitalization has been required for those needing more intensive interventions. Our area is fortunate to see an expanse in inpatient beds with the opening of Acadia's Geisinger Behavioral Health Center. Having resources within our region is important to our community and their access to treatment. Resources being in close proximity is important for individuals and families seeking services. Providers are better able to coordinate with an individual's natural supports and other providers for follow up care. Keeping services within our region is key to successful recovery for those seeking Mental Health services.

A reoccurring theme in our community is the issue of Homelessness and lack of appropriate housing for individuals with Mental Illness. My focus is to address the need for supportive housing and transitional living for those needing housing support beyond independent living. Many individuals require assistance with daily living skills, maintaining medication regime, making meals, budgeting, and keeping scheduled appointments. These individuals can include those needing stable housing after an inpatient hospitalization, state hospital residents, incarcerated individuals, and students transitioning out of high school both in the foster care system and those with limited natural supports. Young Adults are particularly vulnerable to needing this level of care with options that don't quite meet their needs given the current accessibility to supportive housing or programs in our area. There are very few options for individuals that require supportive living when facilities such as Long-Term Structured Residences (LTSRs), Community Residential Rehabilitation Services (CRRS), and Enhanced Personal Care Homes are limited or nonexistent in our counties. Many individuals remain in hospitals or the criminal justice system because they lack an appropriate home plan.

Transportation can be a barrier to many individuals seeking access to both Mental Health Services, Medical Care, Education, and Employment. While some communities have public transportation available it can sometimes be challenging for the individual. Schedules and wait times can be lengthy for some trips. Some transport is limited to appointments only and doesn't account for everyday needs such as employment, shopping for necessities, pharmacy needs, banking, community resources such as County Assistance Offices, Social Security Administration, Community Action Centers, Food Banks, among others. In this ever-adapting

world it is great to see many providers offer phone or virtual appointments for care. However, not every matter can be handled remotely and in person care is still a necessity. Having reliable transportation and access throughout rural regions can really benefit our community members.

So how do we ensure appropriate resources reach those in need? It is important to have caring community members seeking a career in Human Services, Direct Care, Medical, or related fields. Keeping the field competitive with salary and benefits is one way to ensure providers have enough staff to provide the service to our community. Many agencies struggle with being staffed at full capacity. Turnover within our counties is problematic and the process to gain new employees can be lengthy. Streamlining the process, especially for government jobs, can help ease the burden to agencies who are trying to keep up with the demand and needs of our community. A consistent funding source for employment and programs is one of the most important things the community can ask of Legislature for consideration. Backing programs, transportation, housing, and the people employed to keep these services running can only benefit the whole community. Continued grant opportunities and notifications for these grant options can really help many entities bring a needed service to our area. Being able to support these grants long term would help keep the resources available. Adding supports to our Education System and giving School Administration and Teachers resources to offer to students for early education on Mental Health and Independent Living Skills can benefit our future generation to be prepared for transition out of school and into the work force.

In conclusion I want to emphasize there are great resources in our community and many individuals and families have accessed them whether for a short time or long term. Building on what is established and filling in those deficits can help our community grow and meet the needs within our region. It is important to have enough resources close to one's home to get the most success in maintaining stable living and wellness with one's Mental Health. Thank you to Senator Lynda Schlegel Culver and Senator Dave Argall for hosting this Roundtable about such an important matter.