

## CT BHP Community Meetings: A Valuable Resource for Challenging Times

Given the challenges we faced in 2021 as individuals, families, and providers, our need for “community” was greater than ever. Whether navigating COVID guidelines or looking for new ways to connect with services, the Partnership’s community meetings were a place to find support and answers. CT BHP and other behavioral health partners hosted a series of virtual meetings throughout the year that addressed the following topics affecting HUSKY Health members, families, provider networks, and community partners:

- HUSKY Health Program Benefits and Services
- COVID-19 Vaccine Awareness
- The Sixth Annual iCAN Conference

The Consumer and Family Advisory Council (CFAC) and Beacon Regional Network Managers hosted the first round of meetings focused on HUSKY Health programs and services. Presenters included representatives from all the HUSKY Administrative Services Organizations (ASO), Community Health Network of CT (CHN CT), CT Dental Health Partnership (CT DHP), and the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) broker, Veyo. In response to requests from our 2020 series, individuals from the HUSKY Health Member Eligibility team were also on hand to discuss eligibility and enrollment.

In addition to covering topics such as HUSKY covered services and how to find a provider, presenters reviewed COVID-19 related specialty initiatives supported by the ASOs and NEMT broker. Finally, they invited HUSKY Health participants to join member and family driven committees like CFAC, as such participation is critical to addressing this public health crisis.

### ***COVID-19 Vaccine Awareness***

The second round of meetings addressed myths and facts related to the COVID-19 Vaccine. Sponsored by the State of Connecticut’s Governor’s Task Force, and presented by Health Equity Solutions and Premier Consulting, these virtual meetings were designed to inform and educate Connecticut communities about COVID-19 and the various vaccines available.

Members and families had questions about research on specific vaccines, potential allergies, availability in their communities, and where to find additional resources. There were a total of five community meetings in this round, including two evening sessions. Feedback from attendees included acknowledgement of the various myths and rumors saturating their communities and the value of a simplified overview everyone could comprehend.

### ***The Sixth Annual iCAN Conference***

The Annual iCAN Conference returned in 2021, offering consumers education, awareness, and resources related to behavioral health and wellness. Hosted by the Consumer and Family Advisory Council at CT BHP, this virtual event offered ten workshops with the theme of enhancing our vision of partnership by breaking through systemic racial injustice. Sessions included everything from “Fighting the Dual Epidemics of COVID-19 and Death from Overdose” to “Intergenerational Trauma,” from “Minimizing Implicit Bias in Our Journey for Racial Justice” to “Diversity Dialogues.”

Keynote speakers included Alice Farrell, JD, LCSW, MSW, President & CEO, Olive Branch Clinical and Consulting Services, LLC, and a special message from Chris Murphy, US Senator, CT. Other speakers included Beacon CT CEO, Lori Szczygiel, and all three commissioners from the Partnership’s agencies, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Response from the conference’s participants was extremely positive. Virtually all individuals surveyed indicated conference content was good to excellent in terms of relevance and usefulness. Response was similar regarding the quality of speakers and the overall experience.

Select [here](#) to view the iCAN workshops on the [ctbhp.com](http://ctbhp.com) website.

Look out for information on our 2022 series of Community Meetings in upcoming issues of the CT BHP Provider Newsletter.