



FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

Welcome to the Quarterly HeadsUp Newsletter! HeadsUp is an integrated center at the University of Pennsylvania, funded by the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (PA-OMHSAS), providing a full array of free services related to training, education, clinical care, and program evaluation in early psychosis intervention. HeadsUp aims to ensure evidence-based early intervention is accessible to all Pennsylvanians, and that providers receive comprehensive training and fidelity monitoring in early psychosis intervention.

HeadsUp would like to convey our deepest appreciation to Marci Sturgeon-Rusiewicz, Director of ENGAGE FEP Programs in Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties, and R. Marie Wenzel, Director of the PEACE FEP Program in Philadelphia County who will be moving on to new professional opportunities. We are grateful for their many years of dedicated service to PA FEP and wish them the best in their next roles.

In this newsletter, we are excited to highlight one of the most recently funded Pennsylvania First Episode Psychosis (FEP) programs, Community Services Group Early Psychosis Intervention Collaborative (CSG-EPIC) serving Clinton and Lycoming Counties. Despite the ongoing growth of FEP programs in the Commonwealth (now totaling 19 sites), many young Pennsylvanians reside in counties without an FEP program, and thus do not have access to this evidence-based best practice for early psychosis care. We encourage all Counties in Pennsylvania to consider applying for the new funding cycle starting July 2023. OMHSAS provides [detailed information](#) about new and established funding applications with deadlines for submission in late April. Reach out to OMHSAS directly (RA-PWFEP@pa.gov) or to HeadsUp (headsupaorg@gmail.com), if we can be of help answering any questions.

As part of our ongoing outreach program, HeadsUp hosted a virtual panel discussion with Students With Psychosis for college / university students, families, and staff on March 29th, 2023. The presentation was done in collaboration with expert panelists across PA and in partnership with NAMI Keystone PA, East Stroudsburg University, and the University of Pittsburgh Counseling Center. The panel discussion was very well received by the more than 200 attendees!

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FEATURED CENTER CSG-Early Psychosis Intervention Collaborative (EPIC)

The Early Psychosis Intervention Collaborative (EPIC) is an early intervention program for individuals experiencing symptoms of psychosis. At Community Services Group's EPIC program, individuals will receive specialized care using a team based approach to understand and manage the symptoms of psychosis so they can get back to leading a full life as quickly as possible. The EPIC program covers Lycoming and Clinton counties and serves individuals ages 16 to 35 who are experiencing signs of early psychosis or within three years of their first episode of psychosis.



IVY ELDRED, MSW, LCSW
PRACTICE MANAGER,
CSG EPIC PROGRAM

Ivy is the Practice Manager for both the CSG EPIC program and CSG's Lycoming and Clinton County Outpatient programs. Ivy began her employment with CSG in 2007 and worked in a variety of roles prior to obtaining her Master of Social Work degree from Marywood University in 2013. In 2015, Ivy became the Assistant Program Director for the Lycoming/Clinton OP programs and was promoted to the Practice Manager in 2017. Ivy oversees daily program operations, recruits, trains, and supervises staff, while also continuing to provide individual therapy to adults and adolescents. Ivy has 16 years of experience working with individuals experiencing psychosis in both group and individual treatment modalities.



STUDENTS & EARLY PSYCHOSIS: A PANEL DISCUSSION

In March we presented a dynamic panel discussion, "Students & Early Psychosis" which focused on the themes of education, empowerment, and advocacy for college students who experience symptoms of early psychosis. Over 200 attendees joined a group of expert panelists from across the state of Pennsylvania to discuss topics of early psychosis such as signs and symptoms, accommodations, stigma, and recovery.

HeadsUp was honored to welcome Emeka Chima as the keynote speaker and panelist for this event. For the past two years, Emeka has served as an Executive Board Secretary for the non-profit Students With Psychosis coordinating with different hubs and communities worldwide next to his fellow students and advocates with the lived psychosis experience. Using his lived experience with schizophrenia, Emeka has networked with various audiences through his advocacy work and hopes to serve underrepresented communities to create more fulfilling lives. Emeka's story and message was a powerful reminder of the benefits of self-advocacy, peer connection, and hope.

We want to thank the panelists, organizers, partners, and participants for supporting this event and for their investment in the mental health of students. We look forward to more conversations, collaborations, and events like this in the future.



TRAINING & EDUCATION

HeadsUp is excited to continue professional training in topics of relevance to our Pennsylvania and Maryland First Episode Psychosis (FEP) Centers. In addition to our much-anticipated 8th Annual Early Psychosis Conference, some of our featured supplemental training series include Feeling Safe with Aaron Brinen, PsyD, Trauma Informed Care with Kristen Wright, LCPC, LGBTQIA+ Care with Samantha King MSW, MEd, and CPS Support with Elizabeth Thomas, PhD and David Lilly, CPSS. To learn more about these trainings and other educational opportunities visit the [Education & Training page of our website](#).

ADDITIONAL SERVICE HIGHLIGHT- OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

PA FEP Center PEACE (Philadelphia, PA) participated in the Occupational Therapy in Early Intervention in Psychosis Research Collaboration to develop the [Occupational Therapy in the United States Early Intervention in Psychosis Report 2021/2022](#) and the published "[Implementation of occupational therapy within early intervention in psychosis services: Results from a national survey](#)" (Wiley, 2022).



Newest Publications

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which began March 2020 in the United States, served as a catalyst for the acceptance and implementation of tele-mental health (TMH). Pennsylvania First Episode Psychosis Coordinated Specialty Care programs implemented TMH as an essential addition so that individuals could remain engaged in treatment during the pandemic when in-person appointments were unavailable or limited and have continued to offer TMH services as state-mandated restrictions have lifted.

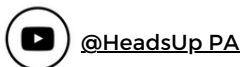
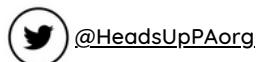
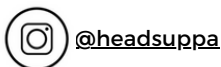
Led by HeadsUp, the [“Tele-mental Health Transitions for Pennsylvania Coordinated Specialty Care Programs for Early Psychosis During the COVID-19 Pandemic”](#) study examined provider and client perspectives of tele-mental health (TMH) in early psychosis care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the unexpected shift to TMH in early psychosis programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, findings indicated a relatively positive transition to TMH and perceived promise of TMH as a sustained part of routine care.

[Telehealth of Coordinated Specialty Care in Early Psychosis During COVID-19](#)

The Psychosis Evaluation and Recovery Center (PERC, Philadelphia, PA) team evaluated service engagement during the pandemic when most services had transitioned to tele-mental health. Their findings support feasibility of telehealth and suggest that offering a hybrid model of in-person and telehealth should be considered going forward.

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If you are interested in contributing to our newsletter please email: headsuppaorg@gmail.com

The yearly PA-wide Fidelity Visits are complete! This year, Megan Jumper and team returned to in-person evaluations measuring Pennsylvania’s First Episode Psychosis centers’ fidelity to the Coordinated Specialty Care treatment model for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing for more informal interactions. Stay tuned- the aggregate report of the 17 centers evaluated will be available soon and hopefully provide useful information about Pennsylvania program’s strength and areas where changes can be pursued.

We are all aware that the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) represents the strongest support and educational network for family members and people with lived experience. Moving into the warmer months of the year, there are a number of [NAMI Walks](#) being organized. It is an inspiring experience to attend a support walk, where people with lived experience, family members, advocates, and health care providers interact casually in the community, spread information, and decrease the stigma of serious mental illness. We encourage you to check out the opportunities for this year in which you and/or your organization may be able to participate and highlight your presence and solidarity.

As happens every year when we move into spring, the upcoming summer will be upon us very soon and it is not too early to start planning with young people on how they will spend their time during the summer months, be it vacation or just taking some opportunities for seasonal outside activities, and perhaps planning a summer or fall event with recreational activities.

HeadsUp continues to provide more rapid access to care and expand into non-urgent referral pathways and assistance with triaging and referring individuals with early psychosis to the PA FEP Center of best-fit (i.e., geographic location) or to other appropriate resources. To increase referral flow directly to sites or through this triage pathway, and to the [HeadsUp Early Psychosis Mentor](#) resource, we have been developing a curated network of mental health providers in the broad regions surrounding existing FEP sites and in underserved rural regions. We also seek to grow our list of agencies or individual providers to refer individuals who are discharged from our FEP programs.

Our goal is to ultimately produce a “living” map tool, launching in the next few months, reflecting an expansive and evolving statewide early psychosis referral and resource network hosted on our website. To this end, we want to invite all organizations and providers interested in joining our referral network to contact us. We also provide free trainings on early psychosis symptoms and screening to community providers, schools and colleges, and other interested stakeholder groups. To learn more, please contact us at 1-833-933-2816 or email: headsuppaorg@gmail.com. Together, we intend these initiatives to support our mission to serve as a robust hub for mental health care clinicians, centers, and advocates across Pennsylvania on the frontlines of education, treatment, and destigmatization of early psychosis.

In the past 3 years and with increased need for mental health care, yet more limited accessibility, open staff positions in our programs remain unfilled for a longer period. HeadsUp assists Pennsylvania FEP sites with disseminating this information more widely please note the [open positions listing on the HeadsUp website](#).

As we continue to expand in exciting new directions, we are ever grateful for the support and guidance from OMHSAS, SAMHSA (through the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services), the HeadsUp Steering Committee, and providers, participants, families, and mental health advocates for our collaborative efforts as we strive to achieve the HeadsUp mission. In these times of change we hope you find ways to promote health and balance, not only to your program participants, but also yourselves and your teams. Wishing you the best for spring 2023!



Christian Kohler, MD
Co-Director



Monica E. Calkins, PhD
Co-Director

FEATURED ONLINE RESOURCES

We continue to grow our online presence, highlighting important news and introducing resources for use among all of our many advocates and stakeholders.

[“FIND A CENTER” LOCATOR](#)

Our website offers an easy-to-use interactive map on our [“Find a Center”](#) page to help Pennsylvania residents locate a First Episode Psychosis (FEP) center nearest to them.

[PA FEP EMPLOYMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

First Episode Psychosis (FEP) care in Pennsylvania is exciting and dynamic work! We are happy to offer an employment section on our website listing open positions at all of our First Episode Psychosis Centers. If you are interested or know someone interested in joining one of our PA FEP teams, visit our employment listing.

[HEADSUP EARLY PSYCHOSIS MENTOR](#)

HeadsUp Early Psychosis Mentor is designed to increase the accessibility of specialized early psychosis care to all people in Pennsylvania. First Episode Psychosis (FEP) Centers are not always conveniently located to people who need them. If you are a Pennsylvania clinician working with a client who may be experiencing early psychosis, we are here to help connect you to information regarding specific care, research, and telehealth resources. For more information watch this brief video. To submit your first question visit the [HeadsUp Early Psychosis Mentor page](#) in the clinician’s space of our website or reach out to us on our toll-free line 1-833-933-2816.