



FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

Welcome to the Quarterly HeadsUp Newsletter. As we enjoy a few moments of summer respite during this fast-paced year, we reflect on our collective accomplishments and steadily plan for exciting new activities this fall! 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 that evidence based early intervention is accessible to all Pennsylvanians, and that providers receive comprehensive training and fidelity monitoring in early psychosis intervention.

In this newsletter, we highlight one of Pennsylvania's longest standing and largest Coordinated Specialty Care programs, the Psychosis Evaluation and Recovery Center (PERC), located in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania. PERC's academic medical center environment provides numerous opportunities to provide psychosis education and training to individuals from many disciplines – including psychiatry physicians, psychology doctoral and master's students, and psychiatry nurses. We recognize however that such specialized training opportunities are not available to the majority of Pennsylvania professionals who encounter young people with psychosis. Over the past quarter, thanks to the generous support of OMHSAS, we have cast a wider net than ever before to community health providers in support of our core mission to increase awareness and knowledge in how to recognize and respond to early psychosis symptoms in the young people they serve. Our free workshops and Grand Round series (CE/CME available) are tailored to enhance both broad and specific skills and competencies, in support of our overarching goal to ensure that community health providers in Pennsylvania who work with young people know how to assess, engage and refer young people to specialty care as needed. Ultimately, we know that these efforts will decrease the stigma and other barriers that young people, especially those from marginalized groups who are historically underserved in mental health care, face when seeking mental health care for psychosis. More free workshops and trainings will be available over the coming year, be sure to check out our Training Calendar (headsup-pa.org/events/) and subscribe to our emails for program announcements. We can also customize trainings for your staff/program. As always, our HeadsUp [Early Psychosis Mentor](#) free consultative service is available to any Pennsylvania professional treating individuals experiencing first episode and early psychosis. We provide individualized support to treating professionals by providing educational resources tailored to your question to aid you in caring for these individuals.

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FEATURED CENTER PERC Psychosis Evaluation & Recovery Center

Situated in the Neurodevelopment & Psychosis Section of the [University of Pennsylvania's Department of Psychiatry](#), the [Psychosis Evaluation & Recovery Center \(PERC\)](#) is a multi-disciplinary program offering consultations on diagnosis, treatment, support and skill development for adolescents and young adults who exhibit warning signs of emerging psychosis or early psychosis, and their families.

The PERC First Episode Psychosis program serves young people aged 16-30 who are experiencing symptoms of early psychosis with onset in the last 24 months and reside in the state of Pennsylvania. The Clinical High Risk program provides evaluation, monitoring and clinical care to youth with distressing and/or interfering unusual thoughts or perceptions. PERC's recovery oriented Coordinated Specialty Care team engages young people in individualized treatment plans aiming to stabilize symptoms, maintain functioning, optimize well-being, and foster talents, skills, relationships and vocations.



Amenia Miller, M.S.Ed, M.Phil. Ed Team Lead, PERC Program



Amenia serves as the team lead and one of the primary therapists in the PERC program at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to joining PERC, Amenia attained her bachelor's in psychology at the University of Pittsburgh and dual master's in professional counseling from the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education. She completed her counseling internship experience at Temple University Episcopal Extended Acute Care Unit, where she cultivated a passion for clinical work surrounding early prevention and clinical care for individuals experiencing psychosis spectrum disorders. In her role as therapist, she aims to provide a high standard of care to individuals through cultivation of self-advocacy and activation of purpose in one's life. Amenia enjoys the opportunity to build connections through listening to other stories, finding similar interests and ultimately aiding in individuals seeing the power in human connection, which she values the most about working at PERC. Equally, having the opportunity to work alongside passionate team members also dedicated to improving young people's lives.

FIRST EPISODE PSYCHOSIS (FEP) CARE IN PENNSYLVANIA IS GROWING!



HeadsUp is excited to welcome Lancaster County to the growing list of specialized First Episode Psychosis (FEP) care locations in Pennsylvania. This brings the number of centers to 18 across the state, serving a total of 23 counties.

PAWELL CAMPAIGN LAUNCH



HeadsUp is excited to announce our collaboration with [Northwell Health](#) and [Strong365](#) to offer teens & young adults across Pennsylvania a better way to access mental health support. Officially launched in June 2024, the [PAWELL campaign](#) provides free, confidential online mental health support to teens, young adults, and their families by offering a simple online mental health quiz and, if needed and desired, a match with a mental health provider, program, or resource to meet their needs and preferences. This includes free and low-cost options.

OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

Towards our goal of educating people about early psychosis, we continue to create dynamic, sharable print and virtual educational materials, recently completing our yearly, no-cost fulfillment of orders of some of these materials to all PA FEP programs. In total we were able to distribute over 5,000 print materials statewide including a new Friends Pamphlet designed to support a young person with a friend who may be experiencing symptoms of early psychosis. Visit our [HeadsUp Materials page](#) to view and share our materials.

ANNUAL FIDELITY REPORTING

Annual fidelity reporting for 2023 is complete for all First Episode Psychosis (FEP) Programs in Pennsylvania receiving funding through the federal SAMSHA block grant. The information used to assess the FEP programs was gathered from fidelity assessment site visits conducted between January and April 2024, with reviewed data from the period of August - October 2023. Fidelity data demonstrate an overall pattern of excellent adherence to the Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) model for Pennsylvania's FEP programs, in particular, perfect fidelity scores across all sites in areas of:

- Inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Multidisciplinary Team Meetings
- Crisis and Safety
- Team Lead
- Treatment Planning

Limitations to the fidelity scoring tool previously recognized allowed for adjustments in scoring to better represent programs' fidelity to the CSC model in 2023. Most notably, we incorporated benchmarks for fidelity specific to program evaluation measures gathered through REDCap, which represents a more stringent set of evaluation criteria. We will continue to refine scoring metrics to ensure fidelity scores accurately capture programs' status. Thank you to all FEP programs and their staff for their contributions to this effort.

FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS CONT...

While workforce development is critically important, so is reaching young people and their families directly, given that many young people experiencing psychosis or its early warning signs may not know how to even begin seeking help. This is why we are especially delighted to announce the launch of the [Strong365/PAWell campaign](#), which offers youth a better way to access mental health support, including for early psychosis.

Across Pennsylvania, Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) for young people experiencing a first episode of psychosis is provided currently by 17 programs, and we are very excited that the number of programs will grow to 18 with the addition of Lancaster County. Our just completed fidelity evaluations of existing programs demonstrate that there is a clear commitment across all of Pennsylvania's FEP programs to provide intensive, high-quality, specialized services to young adults experiencing psychosis for the first time. These programs have continued to maintain the high standards of the CSC model.

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. Wishing you the best for fall 2024!



Monica E. Calkins, PhD
Co-Director



Christian Kohler, MD
Co-Director

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HEADSUP TRAINING AND EDUCATION RECAP

In addition to supporting the growing number of First Episode Psychosis (FEP) programs in Pennsylvania, part of the HeadsUp mission is to ensure access to high quality early psychosis training and education. Through the steadfast and generous support of the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) we have successfully increased the number of dynamic, free offerings available, including CEs/CMEs when applicable.

A highlight of these offerings includes three recently completed in-person (Pittsburgh, State College, Philadelphia) trainings (along with a virtual attendance option), "Recognizing and Responding to Early Psychosis for Community Health Providers." Led by Monica E. Calkins, PhD, Christian Kohler, MD, and Leslie Horton, PhD and designed for Community Health Providers, these full day workshops provided over 200 community mental, behavioral, and physical health workers in 15 states a deep dive into the practice of psychosis identification, management and referral to evidence-based care. Topics included assessment referral for early symptoms, and screening and de-escalation of crisis and suicidal management for individuals experiencing psychosis as well as an overview of the current psychopharmacological treatments regarding symptoms, co-occurring substance use and social determinants of health.

Another highlighted training opportunity currently underway is our 2024 Clinical Care in First Episode Psychosis (FEP) Grand Rounds Series, an intensive (up to 160-hours) delving into applicable, recovery-centered education for individuals involved in early psychosis care. Led by experts in the field, these sessions cover childhood through young adulthood and include tools for early detection, diagnosis, treatment best practices, post-treatment management and family and community support.

Varying sessions are held virtually twice per week via Zoom Events over the course of 7 months via a grand-rounds format from April to October 2024.

Some of the featured trainings in this series are: *Motivational Interviewing, Navigating the Cost-Benefits of Mental Health Self-Disclosure Regarding Employment Accommodations, An Expanded Understanding of High School Accommodations and Supports, Including Family Involvement, Psychopharmacology in Early Psychosis Treatment: Clozaril & Long Acting Injectables (LAIs), and Screening and Differential Diagnosis: Autism and the Psychosis Spectrum.*

Lastly, we are in the planning phases and looking forward to our biggest training event of the year, our upcoming 2024 HeadsUp 9th Annual Early Psychosis Conference! Designed for professionals and practitioners treating early psychosis, this training offers educational opportunities in early psychosis treatment and services. It provides a chance to strengthen skill sets, share best practices with peers, and implement new strategies, research and trends into practice. Week one will run from November 18-22, 2024, and will focus on the First Episode Psychosis Coordinated Specialty Care model. Week two, which will run from December 9-13, 2024, will focus on Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy (CT-R) and its application within early psychosis treatment. We will post more information on the [conference page](#), be sure to check often for updates.



For more information about these and other opportunities, visit the [HeadsUp training and education page](#) on our website which is also the place to request access to free HeadsUp past training recordings, as well as request or schedule a customized early psychosis training for your organization.



We want to convey our heartfelt gratitude and well wishes to **Denise Namowicz** who, after over four decades of service, will be retiring this summer! Since 2016, Denise has tirelessly served the early psychosis community for the HOPE programs through Children's Service Center, which she has grown to three programs covering six counties. Denise has been a staunch advocate for individuals and family members, a leader in the management of effective early psychosis treatment and an active participant in helping to steer the direction of FEP care in Pennsylvania.



THANK YOU!

FEATURED FREE ONLINE RESOURCES

"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. HeadsUp promotes personalized, accessible, and effective care for all people in Pennsylvania, and we can't do it alone! Providing your [feedback](#) to HeadsUp may help increase access to specialized early psychosis care in your area.

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.

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