

Community Support Journal

Montgomery County Community Support Program Committee *Newsletter*

November 2025

Volume 11



CSP Logo designed by Chris Ford

Funding cuts, lawsuits, and fear derailed Pennsylvania's plan to close state hospitals and invest in community mental health care

Source: SpotlightPA

By [Danielle Ohl of Spotlight PA](#) | Nov. 13, 2025

The state's core program to close its psychiatric hospitals and shift care to less-restrictive community programs — the centerpiece of its legal obligation to people with severe mental illness — has instead been used for the past decade to do the opposite, a Spotlight PA investigation has found.



Now demolished Norristown State Hospital building

Created more than 30 years ago, the Community Hospital Integration Project Program, or CHIPP, was designed to get people and dollars out of restrictive and expensive state-

run psychiatric hospitals and into more effective, community-based care.

The money saved by closing hospital beds would be sent to counties. Former state officials told Spotlight PA the local funds were intended to be sacred — a permanent investment in the care promised not only to the people leaving state hospitals, but to future generations who would need it.

CHIPP was never intended to be the full funder of all things, said Sherry Snyder, a former official in the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

But it was supposed to be “like the mortar between the bricks,” she said.

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Groundbreaking on new behavioral health crisis center

By: Kathie Mitchell, CSJ Editor
King of Prussia—On Monday, the Montgomery County Commissioners held a groundbreaking ceremony livestreamed on Facebook to announce the plans for a \$21 million Emergency Behavioral Health Crisis Center that will provide 24-7 crisis services for adults and children.

Commissioners Chair Neil Makhija said it was the first ever 24-7 behav-

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For a time, the program worked.

But since 2015, the state has stopped closing most vacant hospital beds, abandoning a necessary step toward achieving the program's public goal of reducing the need for state mental institutions.

Over the same period of time, new funding for community care dramatically slowed.

See the rest of the article [here](#). Or subscribe to www.spotlightpa.org.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY EMERGENCY FOOD DRIVE

Now through December 31, 2025

Due to the federal shutdown, SNAP (food stamp) benefits are on hold until the government reopens. This **affects over 62,000 Montgomery County residents** who rely on these benefits to feed their families. You can help by donating non-perishable food to support neighbors in need.

Suggested Items:

Cereal, shelf stable milk, oatmeal, complete pancake mix, syrup, canned chicken or tuna, canned pasta, pasta, spaghetti sauce, soups and stews. Any shelf-stable meal such as Dinty Moore®, Hormel® Compleats®, or Chef Boyardee®.



DROP OFF LOCATIONS

DeKalbCenter Norristown
1430 DeKalb Street | Norristown, PA 19401
(Main entrance off of Green Street)



More drop off locations → www.montgomerycountypa.gov/HHSDonations

2025 Thanksgiving Meal Kit Program

We're coming together to ensure every family has a place at the table this Thanksgiving. The Pottstown Area Food Collaborative, in partnership with the Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities and local community organizations, are working together to provide Thanksgiving Meal Kits to families in need.

Need a Meal Kit?

1. Fill out the Thanksgiving Meal Request Form at: pottstowncluster.org/2025thanksgivingmeals
2. Choose your pickup location
3. Pick up your meal kit on Monday, November 24, 2025, between 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Want to Help?

Host a Thanksgiving Side Meal Kit Food Drive!

- Mashed potatoes
- Gravy
- Canned green beans
- Cranberry sauce
- Stuffing

Sign up in increments of 200 units per item and select one item.

To sign up, email: ThanksgivingMeals@pottstowncluster.org



ioral health center in the county and would be addressing a long, dire need for adequate and easily accessible crisis care.

The center will use the “No Wrong Door Approach” where trained staff will meet people where they are and provide crisis treatment and comprehensive discharge planning.

“We are going to make sure we serve every resident who comes through these doors and get them the treatment they need,” Makhija said at the November 17th groundbreaking.



L to R - Clare Higgins, HopeWorx, Jill Semple, OMHSAS, Commissioners Makhija, Winder, DiBello, AG Dave Sundy, Matt Miller Connections Health Solutions

Makhija said there is a national crisis in mental health and substance use among adults and youth and only half of those individuals receive the treatment they need. Local, state and federal partners came together to provide the \$21 million for the facility. Deaths by suicide and overdose due to the Opioid crisis are not rare or uncommon. The county was able to obtain \$16 million from funds through Opioid lawsuit settlements. The county contributed \$6 million from the capital budget to make the center possible.

Due to a lack of resources, individuals and families often end up in hospital emergency rooms that are ill-equipped to handle behavioral health issues. Sometimes people in a crisis land in jail. Makhija cited examples of families seeking help who have waited days in an ER before an intake is made and the situation addressed.

The new center will be located at 1201 West Eighth Avenue, King of Prussia. It is expected to open in December 2026.

Detective Brendan Dougherty of the Upper Merion Township Police is a former crisis intervention specialist and a member of the Montgomery County Veterans Response Team. Representing first responders, he praised the way the county collaborated with law enforcement and first responders.

Matt Miller, of Connections Health Solutions - the organization that will operate the new center - said they were looking forward to partnering with the county as they serve community members in a person-center approach regardless of insurance, demographics or income.

Miller said stabilization is critical and so are comprehensive discharge plans, including housing, transportation and other social services. Connections has served other communities for over 20 years with highly trained, multi-disciplinary teams that result in higher and faster success rates.

To learn more about Connections Health Solutions, go to: <https://connectionshs.com/kingofprussia> .



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA

**GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY:
LIVESTREAM MONDAY AT 1:30 PM**

**EMERGENCY BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH CRISIS CENTER**

Help Us Help You

CSPStories@hopeworxinc.org

Voicemail messages 267-989-1798

During these times of change and uncertainty, the CSP Advocacy Committee invites you to share your story on how the budget cuts have impacted you or a family member.

Your lived experience is important to us! You are not alone in this and together we can make a difference.

We encourage you to share this with people who have also been impacted by these cuts. Every voice needs to be heard and we are here to listen.



**Anonymous
and
Confidential**





ELECTION DAY

BY THE NUMBERS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY



VOTE
HERE

Highest odd-year return rate

85%

**MAIL-IN BALLOTS
RETURNED**

90,757 out of 106,335
ballots requested



49.79%

TURNOUT

Highest in Southeastern PA!



307,840

VOTES CAST IN MONTCO



ELECTION HEROES

428 Judge of Elections

2,619 Poll Workers

224 Student Poll Workers

100 County Staff

All helped make Election Day smooth and accessible across Montgomery County





For more information, contact the Statewide CSP Ambassador via email at alex@pmhca.org

STATEWIDE CSP MEETING

REGISTER FOR THE EVENT
CLICK HERE OR SCAN THE CODE



**THURSDAY,
 DECEMBER 11TH**

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

14TH ANNUAL BENEFIT FOR THE BRAIN



WHAT IS BENEFIT FOR THE BRAIN?

Join us for an inspiring evening celebrating advancements in mental health treatment and recovery.

Your sponsorship supports NAMI Montgomery County PA's mission to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness through free education, support, and advocacy.



EVENT PROCEEDS FUND THESE FREE PROGRAMS:

- Family to Family - 8 week course for families & caregivers of adults living with mental illness.
- Peer to Peer - 8 session recovery course for adults, led by peers with lived experience.
- NAMI Basics - 6 session course for parents & caregivers of children and teens.
- Connection Peer Support Groups - Peer led groups for individuals living with mental illness.
- Family Support Groups - Peer led groups for families & caregivers.
- In Our Own Voice - Lived experience presentations for schools, faith communities & law enforcement.
- Ending the Silence - Student focused program to raise awareness & reduce stigma.



SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Hero Sponsor \$5,000

- Logo on NAMI Montgomery County PA website
- Full page digital color ad acknowledgment
- Prominent event signage
- Logo on silent auction tables
- Verbal acknowledgment at event
- Recognition on social media and email
- Eight event tickets

Star Sponsor \$2,500

- Logo on NAMI Montgomery County PA website
- Half page digital color ad acknowledgment
- Individual event signage
- Recognition on social media and email
- Six event tickets

Friend Sponsor \$1,000

- Logo on NAMI Montgomery County PA website
- Half page digital color ad acknowledgment
- Recognition on social media and email
- Event signage
- Four event tickets

Event Sponsor \$500

- Logo on NAMI Montgomery County PA website
- Quarter page digital color ad acknowledgment
- One event ticket

ADVERTISING

*Offered in Black and White

- Quarter Page Ad - \$150

Send image to:
development@namimontcopa.org

HOW TO SPONSOR

Sponsorship & Ad Deadline: November 7th

Mail a check payable to:

NAMI Montgomery County PA
100 W Main Street, Suite 204
Lansdale, PA 19446

Invoice available upon request

OR

Scan the QR Code to make a digital payment



namimontcopa.org/get-involved/benefit-for-the-brain

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact:
development@namimontcopa.org
or
Christine Stutman
(cstutman@namimontcopa.org)



namimontcopa.org/get-involved/benefit-for-the-brain

NAMI Montgomery County PA
Benefit for the Brain Website





FAMILY TO FAMILY

A free, 8-session education program for family, friends and significant others of adults with mental health conditions. This class provides information about mental health conditions, alongside topics like communication, problem solving, treatment and recovery.

From 6:30pm - 8:30pm,
starting on October 20th
via Zoom



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1735591192979?aff=oddtcreator>



Dual Diagnosis Support Group

COME JOIN THIS SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER AND A MENTAL HEALTH CONIDITION

EVERY 1ST AND 3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 6:30PM

VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM





VETERANS *Support Group*

A **free** support group
for our veterans



1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the
Month at 7:30pm
Location: Zoom



Scan the QR Code to register now!





LGBTQIA+ SUPPORT GROUP



Come join this free virtual support group for members (18+) of the LGBTQIA+ community



Every 1st and 3rd Sundays
of the month

1:00pm



November is Men's Mental Health Awareness Month

"I'd like to change the meaning of man up, and what it means to be a man. There's a lot of pressure on men - empowering men is also empowering the family."

~ Randy Ryan

"Its not unmanly to get help, and it doesn't mean you aren't a real man."

~ Kyle G.

"I needed to learn how to heal....I needed to learn how to feel, and how to express myself again."

~ Elliott connie

"Its getting out of this fear that men can't talk to each other - its ok, and you can tell me your story."

~ Dan Gillison

Montgomery County Code Blue has been declared, beginning Wednesday, November 19th, 2025 at 9:00 PM through tomorrow, Thursday, November 20th, 2025 at 9:00 AM.



Montgomery County declares

CODE BLUE COLD WEATHER EMERGENCY

www.montgomerycountypa.gov/CodeBlue



Access Services - Street Medicine
homelessoutreach@accessservices.org



LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP
YOUR UNHOUSED NEIGHBORS



NOVEMBER 16-22, 2025



Creating Increased Connections
A program of Resources for Human Development

CREATING INCREASED CONNECTIONS (CIC) GROUPS



TAKING BACK OUR POWER

Taking Back Our Power is a peer support group for individuals with lived experience of sensory phenomena (like hearing things others don't hear) and unusual beliefs

MONDAYS
2:00PM-3:00PM
Hopeworx
1210 Stanbridge St #600,
Norristown, PA 19401

TUESDAYS
2:30PM-4:00PM
Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
625 Montgomery Ave
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

THURSDAYS
1:00PM-2:00PM
Trinity Reformed Church
60 N. Hanover St
Pottstown, PA 19464

CIRCLE OF HOPE

Circle of Hope is peer-to-peer led discussion group. Join us for lively conversation about how we are feeling, our successes and challenges, our recovery, and how we maintain our wellness. Everyone is welcome.

WEDNESDAYS
1:00PM-2:00PM
Hopeworx
1210 Stanbridge St #600,
Norristown, PA 19401

THURSDAYS
10:30AM-12:00PM
Hopeworx
1210 Stanbridge St #600,
Norristown, PA 19401

LIVE ANOTHER DAY

TUESDAYS
12:30PM-1:45PM
Lansdale Library
301 Vine St
Lansdale, PA 19446

Alternatives to Suicide groups are intended as non-judgmental spaces where people can share some of their darkest thoughts without being assumed to have an illness or being assessed for involuntary interventions. Openly exploring these thoughts - and the feelings and experiences underneath them - is often the key to moving toward something different.

WALK AND TALK

Every 1st and 3rd Friday
11:00AM-12:30PM
King of Prussia Mall
Meet at Food Court on 1st Floor
Join us for a time to work on our wellness, and enjoy each other's company as we exercise together.
Enter between KPOT and Bonefish Grill
160 N Gulph Rd
King of Prussia, PA 19406

WOMENS IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCES GROUP

This group was created for women as a safe environment to voice & openly share our life stories as women & to empower ourselves to find greater meaning & purpose in life.

WEDNESDAYS
3:00PM-4:30PM
Teams Link
<https://teams.microsoft.com/Womensgroup>

For More Information Contact Sheila.HallPrioleau@RHD.org 215-906-0453
www.ciconnections.org

Thanksgiving Crafts



Starting September 23rd

We'll be creating small crafts for gifts to share with guests during Thanksgiving distribution.

Decoupage Wood discs | Paper Turkeys | Thanksgiving Cards



Volunteer Opportunities

- Wooden discs need to be prepped (painted)
- Collect fall & Thanksgiving themed napkins
- Decoupage - Glue napkin to Wood Disc
- Write Thanksgiving notes to our guests
- Assemble paper Turkeys



Supplies provided for a great "take-home" project!

HALLOWEEN OPEN MIC

Saturday, October 25th | 12-3 PM

A festive Open Mic complete with a costume contest, light refreshments, and fun crafts/activities for kids.

We'll need:

- Volunteers for planning and setup
- Donations of prizes for costume winners
- Support running crafts/activities

Starting December 2nd **UGLY SWEATER - Check In**

Who: Any Montgomery County, PA Residents

When: Stop by anytime during Martha's Food distribution

How to participate:

- **In-person:** Wear your silliest, quirkiest, or most festive sweater. Staff will snap a photo and do a quick "winter check-in."
- **Online:** Post a photo in your ugly sweater, tag Martha's, and use #uglyswear@Marthas

Prize: We will review all the photos posted online to determine who has the ugliest sweater. The winner will receive a \$100 Wegmans gift card.



Montgomery County, PA

Coordinated by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

WINTER

COAT DRIVE

September 15 to January 2, 2026

Accepting New Coats Only

Greatest need: Men's and all Children's Sizes

Also accepting hats, scarves, gloves, blankets, and small space heaters (electric only)



DROP OFF LOCATIONS

DeKalb Center Norristown
1430 DeKalb Street | Norristown, PA 19401
(Main entrance off of Green Street)

More drop off locations → www.montgomerycountypa.gov/HHSDonations



QUESTIONS?

Email veronica.hilghman@montgomerycountypa.gov
or call 610-278-5885.





MOVING AGENCIES TOWARD EXCELLENCE

SAVE THE DATE!

MAX ASSOCIATION 2025 CONFERENCE

- THEME:** Mental Wellness and Self-Care
- WHEN:** November 21, 2025
Registration starts at 8:00 am
- WHERE:** Holiday Inn Lansdale
1750 Sumneytown Pike, Kulpsville

**KEYNOTE BY:****ROBERT NASEEF, PHD****“Resilience, Resistance, and
Making a Difference:***Guidance for Living and Loving in
Community through Difficult Times”*

Robert Naseef, Ph.D. has a distinct voice as a psychologist and father of an adult son with autism. He has spoken around the country and trained professionals internationally in treating autism and supporting families. He speaks at conferences nationally and internationally on issues facing families of children with autism and other special needs.

Subcommittee Reports from October 2025

Advocacy Subcommittee: Topic: **Advocacy Flyer CSP Stories** – Cindy presented information about CSP Stories Flyer. Scan QR code and they can email their story about how the budget cuts affect their lives. Once we get messages, compile stories, and who we will share the stories with. Open to suggestions. Christine suggested to reach to Robin Stelly and ask her to next meeting. SEPTA cuts, Medicaid cuts how they affect access to care. Flyer has been emailed to the advocacy committee members. Advocates will share with others. Send flyer to Central and other providers to post in physical spaces. Post on Facebook. Email: CSPstories@hopeworxinc.org.

Topic: Advocacy - Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) – Someone could go to the court and ask to have someone court-ordered to outpatient treatment. In recent years, it’s become more popular across the state. Every year since approved by the state, CSP writes a letter opposing AOT that forces people into treatment. Letter is sent to the Montgomery County Commissioners. Tracey suggested personal examples of what could happen if AOT approved.

MOTION approved: Committee agreed to send the AOT letter to the commissioners this year.

Topic: Advocacy - Election information – Information in this month’s newsletter. You can still register to vote until Oct. 20th. The last day to apply for absentee ballot is Oct. 28th. Voting: Montco has satellite offices at 6 different around county. On weekends until election, you can get help with voting. Online: www.montgomerycountypavoterservices.org. Get sample ballot there. No federal offices up for election. PA statewide races are for judges. Every 10 years we vote to retain them or not. Where Sue lives, her borough council is up for election. Other areas have school board races. These local elected officials affect our lives directly.

Topic: Advocacy - New Work Requirements – Tracey said work required, doctor’s sign off. Val Arkoosh put together a website www.dhs.pa.gov/work. SNAP with requirements has taken effect. More strict. Medicaid changes are coming. Sue said if you’re on disability, that won’t change. Open your mail and make sure your address is updated with the post office to stay informed.

Community Outreach Subcommittee: Still looking for ideas.

Conference Subcommittee: Justin will look for some potential venues. Variety Club got back. Harry will arrange a meet up time with them to tour facility. Looking at different food options. Harry said the farm is too expensive. Tents \$4,200 and traffic control \$2,000. We’ll save \$6,200 going to another venue.

CSP MEETING
CALENDER
2025-26

Meetings are held every third Thursday, monthly from 12: 00-2:30pm

The next meetings will be:

November	20
December	18
January	15
February	19

Meetings are held in person and via Zoom.

Montgomery County CSP Executive Committee

2024/2025 Tri-Chairs
 Provider Member: Jim Markey
 Person in Recovery: Morgan Killian-Moseley
 Family Member: Vacant

2024/2025 Sub-Committee Chairs
 Community Outreach: Erin Villarose
 Advocacy: Cindy Todd & Christine Stutman
 Conference: Harry Bowles & Justin Chamrin

2024/2025 Treasurer
 Erin Anguish



County Liaison -
Tracey Riper-Thomas

Fiduciary - HopeWorx, Inc.

1210 Stanbridge Street,
Suite 600
Norristown, PA 19401
610-270-3685

CSP Principles

- * Person Centered/
Person Empowered
- * Culturally competent
- * Designed to Meet
Special Needs
- * Community Based
with Natural Supports
- * Flexible
- * Coordinated
- * Accountable
- * Strengths-Based

CSP Mission Statement:

Montgomery County's Community Support Program (CSP) brings together individuals that receive mental health services, their family members, providers and the Department of Behavioral Health in an equal partnership to promote recovery and excellence in the delivery of community-based mental health services.

The committee strives to include a balance of people who use services, people who provide services, family members, and interested members of the community at large. The CSP initiatives continue to grow state, regionally and county wide. As the involvement increases CSP has become a place that feedback can truly be given to the county from individuals that receive services and information can be given that suits the needs and requests of those that attend.

Organizations who regularly send representatives to CSP:

Central Behavioral Health, AdvocacyWorx, Community Satisfaction Team of Montgomery County, Magellan Health Services, Montgomery Co. Department of Behavioral Health, Montgomery County Emergency Services (MCES), NAMI Montgomery County, Norristown Vet Center, Resources for Human Development, Salisbury Behavioral Health

CSP Subcommittees:

- * **Advocacy Subcommittee**—Works on legislative, policy, communication, budget, voter education and other issues related to mental health services in the county, statewide and at the federal level when relevant. At the direction of the CSP Committee, the Advocacy Subcommittee gathers information on issues, plans advocacy events and creates a monthly newsletter to provide information to the stakeholder network as well as the community at large about the work of CSP. The newsletter also provides updates on new and changing mental health services provided in Montgomery County. The newsletter editor can be contacted at: kathiemitchell8221@gmail.com.
- * **Community Outreach Subcommittee**—Works on facilitating opportunities for people in the CSP community to be more involved in the Montgomery County community. This includes implementing the Community Connections grants, which provide funding for people to participate in a variety of activities. The committee also implements transportation grants that provide gas cards and SEPTA day passes to CSP community members. The annual CSP Poster Art contest is also organized by this committee.
- * **Conference Subcommittee** – The conference subcommittee will plan and fundraise for the annual Montgomery County CSP Conference.

Meetings:

12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

3rd Thursday of each
month

Montgomery County
Community College
Blue Bell, PA

In person & Zoom

Kathie Mitchell, Newsletter Editor

Join our Mailing list!

We have an email list as well as a regular mailing, to join:

Send an e-mail to:

pjohnson@hopeworxinc.org

Or send your contact info to this mailing address:

We invite all peers, family members and providers/professionals to attend.

Website: www.montcopacsp.org

<https://www.facebook.com/montcopacsp/>