



# RCPA

REHABILITATION & COMMUNITY  
PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

# 2023

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## YEAR IN REVIEW

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# RCPA 2023 Year in Review

## The Value of RCPA Membership



### A Message from Richard Edley

Over ten years ago, the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) was born through a merger between two statewide associations with shared interests. Since then, RCPA and its provider members have emerged as trusted leaders, especially among our most vulnerable individuals and their families.

RCPA and its members continue to be the “go to” experts at the state and federal levels, and have successfully influenced decision makers while promoting effective, efficient, and high-quality care. We aspire to create innovative and integrative changes while facing an ever-changing health care environment, including a critical workforce shortage and tightening fiscal resources.

We hope you enjoy this “Year in Review” as a celebration of all of our achievements, as well as a landmark on which to build future endeavors, to further enhance the lives of those we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Edley'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Richard S. Edley, PhD  
President/CEO



*Representing providers  
of health and human  
services committed to  
effective, efficient, and  
high quality care.*

## Government Relations and Advocacy



### Capitol Day

On April 24, RCPA held its annual Capitol Day. RCPA staff met with House and Senate leadership and legislative staff to discuss RCPA's 2023/24 budget priorities. RCPA also held a press conference and rally on the steps of the Capitol outside the Main Rotunda. The rally focused on the need for funding in health and human services to combat the workforce crisis as well as an increase in training for staff and advocacy for telehealth, amongst other issues.

Those who spoke at our rally included RCPA President/CEO Richard Edley and RCPA SUD Treatment Services Policy Director Jason Snyder. The two spoke of insufficient funding, overbearing regulations, and other issues deeply affecting human services providers in the Commonwealth. Legislators who spoke at the rally included Rep. Mike Schlossberg, Rep. Dan Miller, and Rep. Doyle Heffley. The legislators discussed the need for additional funding for those who work in the health and human services field. Also speaking at the rally were Lloyd Wertz, Executive Director of Family Training and Advocacy Center and Sherri Landis, then Executive Director of The Arc of PA. Both spoke passionately on the challenges facing those working in health and human services.

### Delta Center Grant

The Delta Center for a Thriving Safety Net, along with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, awarded RCPA and Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers (PaCHC) a [third year grant extension](#) for their work in expanding telehealth access and integrated care.

### CMS Proposed Access Rule

RCPA [sent a letter](#) to CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure regarding their Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), "Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services." The letter stated that the provision on "pay adequacy" that mandates 80% of reimbursement payments for specific services must go toward direct care compensation. Our letter emphasized that it is crucial to address payment adequacy comprehensively and in a manner that does not force providers to cut vital resources. We asked that CMS not include the 80% compensation requirement in the final rule and instead prioritize regular rate reviews and the establishment of competitive wages for direct care workers in rate models to achieve sustainable and impactful change.

## Coalition for Choice

The Coalition For Choice (CFC) is a group of organizations that place a high value on consumer choice and control. Their mission is to develop and advance self-directed programs of community-based long-term care services and supports for Medicaid-eligible people with disabilities and seniors that ensure full participant input, choice, and control in Pennsylvania. Coalition members include advocacy organizations and providers of various aspects of community-based long-term care services and supports in the Commonwealth. Their guiding principles can be found [here](#). RCPA provided comments to DHS and participated in two rallies at the Capitol regarding Agency With Choice and the consumer-directed services (FMS).

## March on Harrisburg for Mental Health

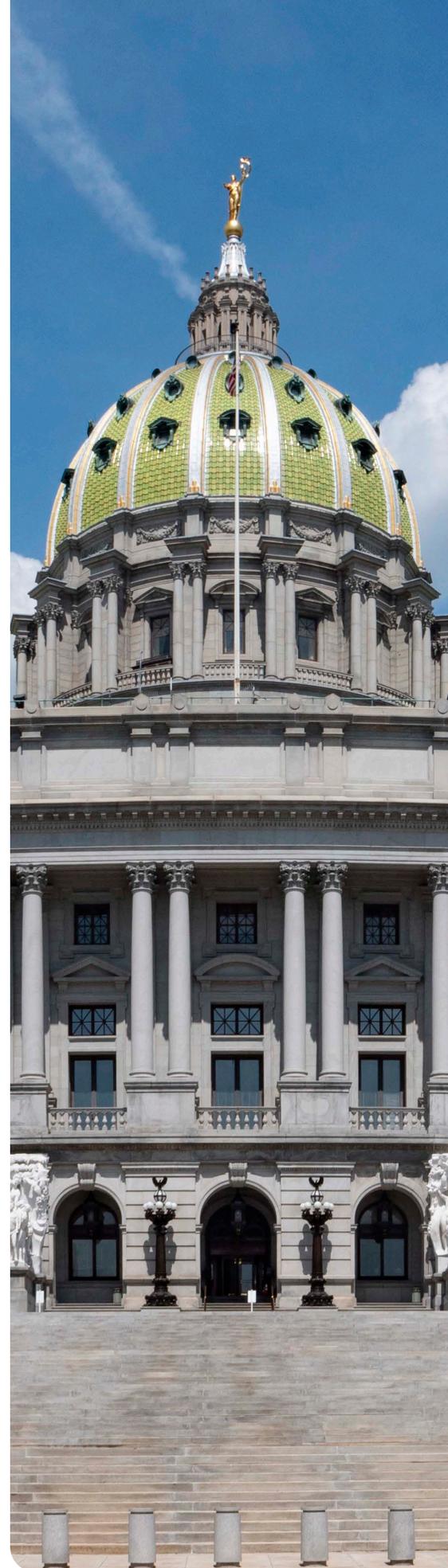
On September 27, a coalition of mental health advocates led a grassroots effort to bring awareness for mental health funding to the Harrisburg Capitol and the PA General Assembly. [More than 300 marchers](#) assembled on the steps of the Capitol.

## DOL Proposed Rule Comments/Letter

On November 7, 2023, RCPA [submitted comments](#) to the Department of Labor's Hour and Wage Division regarding the proposed rule "Defining and Delimiting the Exemptions for Executive, Administrative, Professional, Outside Sales, and Computer Employees (RIN 1235-AA39)." While we understand the need to modernize and update the Fair Labor Standards Act exemption regulations, RCPA strongly urged DOL to re-examine the proposed new salary threshold in a manner that considers the unique pressures on health care providers, as well as regional variations in the cost of living and average salary for human services providers. As currently written, the proposal unfortunately does not consider the implications of current health care funding for safety net services. Thus, the current proposal would have a potentially devastating effect on health care organizations serving low-income individuals with serious and complex disorders and disabilities, resulting in the need for service cutbacks and program closures.

## HCBS Leadership Summit

RCPA joined with other ANCOR provider associations to hold a Regional Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Leadership Summit. Participants from CMS offices in Maryland, Virginia, DC, and Pennsylvania met with leadership from provider associations to hold collaborative conversations and discuss potential solutions for HCBS system issues. We hope that these meetings will continue in the future in order to foster relationships among system leaders.



## IDD Legislative Task Force (HR 212)

RCPA President & CEO Richard Edley participated in a series of meetings of key stakeholders selected to review the entire IDD system. RCPA was successful in nominating and having accepted three provider participants and one family member participant. This included such topics as community participation, individual and family choice, the range of residential settings in PA and the country, and services for those with complex needs. A final report is due in January 2024.



## ID/A Associations

ID/A associations collaborated in a new way this past year, banding together to develop a [unified budget ask](#). This message was shared through meetings with legislators and [contacting the governor](#). Additionally, we held rallies at the Capitol.

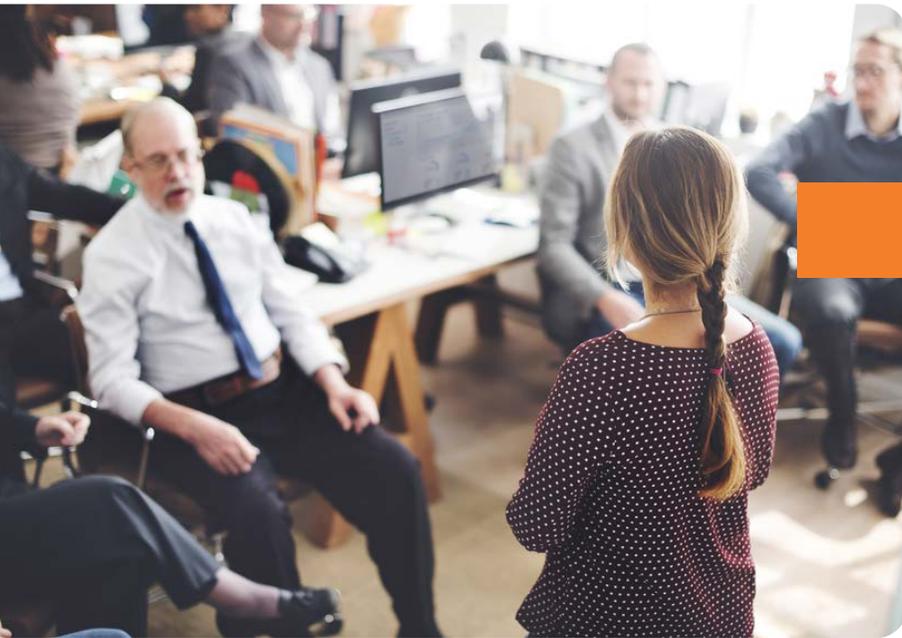
## Act 66 (SB 941)

With RCPA as a driver, Act 66 was signed into law, enabling staffing flexibility for Pennsylvania's licensed addiction treatment providers. Our priority in the new law -- expanding staff-to-client ratios that have become burdens to accessing care, especially in

a workforce crisis – is a central piece of the new legislation. To support our work, RCPA provided testimony at two hearings: the Center for Rural Pennsylvania's "New Developments in the Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Crisis in Rural Pennsylvania" and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee's "Barriers to Addiction Treatment."

## Opioid Settlement Funding

RCPA continued its efforts to ensure transparency and fidelity in how Pennsylvania counties spend more than \$1 billion over 18 years in opioid remediation funds as a result of a settlement between states' attorneys general, a manufacturer, and multiple distributors of opioids. RCPA advocated its position in legislative meetings, [panel discussions](#), and [news stories](#) that, in the words of then-Attorney General Josh Shapiro, the spirit of the settlement is to "expand access to life-saving treatment options."



## Education and Training

### Physical Health/Behavioral Health (PH/BH) Series

In recent years, it has been determined that the provision of integrated behavioral/physical health care and models of whole person care are essential to ensuring overall positive health outcomes in the lives of people with mental illnesses, substance use disorders, and children with serious emotional disturbances. RCPA held a series of webinars, designed to be an open dialogue about innovations and the evolution of service delivery in Pennsylvania, with a focus on how to best integrate behavioral health and physical health services. Subsequent to these webinars, the PH/BH series culminated with a panel discussion at the RCPA Annual Conference. Collectively, the focus in the series has been on integration at the provider level, as well as a broader view and perspective from the administration.

Topics and presenters included:

- Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill and Representative Seth Grove, Minority Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, discussed behavioral health services in Pennsylvania. This gave them the opportunity to discuss their plans for integration of BH and PH services in the Commonwealth.
- Representatives from the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) and the Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP), who presented on their collective vision of the

integration of physical and behavioral health services. This enabled the state departments to share their efforts to use initiatives and the managed care contracts to move toward integrated service provision, and their ideas moving forward.

- A topic also covered in this series was *Navigating Change: How Behavioral Health Providers in Carve-Out States Can Successfully Integrate Care*. Panelists shared their insights and experiences from the states of Texas, Oregon, and Arizona, highlighting the strategies and approaches that have been implemented to effectively integrate care.
- Another presentation focused on various integrated care approaches that have been successfully implemented by counties, their partner BH-MCOs, and providers, which have resulted in positive clinical and life outcomes.

### DEI Review

Our member-led DEI Committee continues to provide a supportive place for members to collaborate and share on DEI efforts and challenges. The committee curated and shared dozens of DEI-related trainings, webinars, articles, and resources. Members participating in the committee benefitted from monthly discussions about strategies to multiply the work and impact of DEI representatives in each RCPA organization.

## 2023 Conference, A Decade of Unity: Enhancing Lives and Shaping the Future

The 2023 Conference proved a very successful celebration of our 10 years with close to 800 attendees this year! We were honored to have presentations from state and national leaders who shared their experiences and knowledge with our attendees.

- This year's event featured more than 60 workshops, a vibrant Connections Hall, and networking opportunities to interact with colleagues, spur creative thinking, and create change.
- We were privileged to have DHS Secretary Valerie Arkoosh present the opening keynote address, a plenary session with conference favorite Michael Cohen on how to become a "destination employer," and a panel discussion on addressing the workforce crisis.
- We also welcomed distinguished speaker, retired New Hampshire Supreme Court Justice John Broderick, who shared his personal and professional experiences with substance use disorder and mental health challenges in his family.
- We heard inspiring thoughts from keynote speaker Chaz Kellem, who discussed strategies for expanding DEI efforts in organizations, and were especially excited to welcome speaker and comedian Kirsten Michelle Cills, who brought a smile to our faces.
- Our closing plenary featured national updates from Chuck Ingoglia, President of the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and Donna Martin, Senior Director, State Partnerships & Innovation of ANCOR.

Workshop sessions focused on workforce development, technology in service provision, data collection, Center for Excellence updates, telehealth, health care transformation, trauma-informed care, addressing cultural barriers, and more.

### IPRC Webinars

In 2023, the IPRC hosted nine live educational webinars for providers on a broad range of clinical, administrative, and regulatory topics. All webinars were recorded and remain accessible for member review and future reference on the IPRC website. In January 2023, IPRC collaborated with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF International) to host a learning session for provider members on frequently cited standards and strategies to improve consistency, outcome collection, and care delivery.



## Policy and Fiscal Analysis



### ODP Selective Contracting

RCPA has been actively involved in reviewing the proposed plans for a selective contracting waiver for residential services and supports coordination in PA. In June 2023, we submitted [formal comments to ODP](#) to express our concerns. As the strategic thinking groups have met with ODP, we have kept our members up to date with their progress, and have provided feedback to ODP. ODP has since changed the name of this initiative to Performance-Based Contracting, and continues to develop [plans for implementation](#).

### Value-Based Payment

RCPA developed a survey to assess whether RCPA provider members have in place the foundational components necessary for value-based payment (VBP) arrangements and to gauge members' level of experience with VBP. RCPA issued a brief along with [survey results](#), which drove

the agenda of 2023's quarterly provider member-only meetings, with topics covering such areas as accurately calculating costs to provide services and risk stratification.

### SUD Treatment Rate-Setting

RCPA worked with the legislature to introduce a resolution, and the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) to support its research efforts to better understand the Commonwealth's SUD treatment rate-setting process. The [JSGC report](#), issued in June and titled "Medical Assistance Capitation Funding for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Providers Within the Commonwealth," found – among other key takeaways – that the process for developing reimbursement rates should be made more transparent and that funding opportunities should focus on sustainable rate increases instead of inconsistent lump sums.

### ID/A Workforce Survey

RCPA encouraged our members to participate in a [joint association ID/A workforce study](#) to gather data to use in our advocacy efforts. Additionally, we surveyed providers regarding their ability to continue providing services; [see the results here](#).

### ODP Incident Management

In 2021, ODP implemented an Incident Management Bulletin directing providers how to identify, report, and respond to unusual incidents. Providers have struggled with various requirements; particularly the frequency of conducting certified investigations, and the inconsistency in application of the bulletin experienced between various counties and reviewers in the process. RCPA developed a work group consisting of provider members and met with ODP throughout 2023. We

developed [formal recommendations for ODP](#) to consider implementing for more consistent application of the bulletin, and more effective use of team members' time. In November, ODP released an [Incident Management Review Guide](#) that addresses many of the recommendations we offered.

## Regulatory Reform Recommendations

RCPA policy directors worked with members and stakeholders to create a set of [regulatory reform recommendations](#) across all policy divisions. These recommendations were shared with DHS and the PA General Assembly, in efforts to reduce administrative and process burdens impacting access to care.

## Psych Telehealth

RCPA continues its telehealth legislative advocacy, introducing language for a new bill that ensures telehealth flexibilities in the use of advanced practice professionals to address the shortage of psychiatric services and lack of access.

## OCDEL Rate Methodology Study

RCPA, along with other early intervention stakeholders, worked with DHS/OCDEL to develop a [new rate methodology initiative](#) and address decades of underfunding for early intervention services in the Commonwealth.

## OMHSAS Waiver Process

RCPA led advocacy efforts to revise the regulatory waiver process through The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), in developing the ["Request for Waiver Form"](#) and a newly revised ["Information and Guidelines for Providers Regarding Waiver Submission"](#) document, to assist providers when submitting a request to waive. RCPA also conducted an [OMHSAS Waiver Process Survey](#) to guide these efforts.





## Public Relations/Special Features

### RCPA 10th Anniversary Recap

The Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) was created in 2013 through a merger between two statewide associations with shared interests. Since then, RCPA and its provider members have emerged as trusted leaders known for shaping policy and enhancing lives, especially among our most vulnerable individuals and their families. In 2023, RCPA [marked its 10th anniversary](#), having grown to become one of the largest state health and human services trade organizations in the nation. This was recognized throughout the year, in particular at the 2023 Annual Conference last October. Here's a look at some of RCPA's major achievements over this [Decade of Unity](#).



### Association Representation

RCPA and our members [have a voice](#) in numerous coalitions, task forces, advisory councils, and other collaborative entities that have a direct influence on policy, which in turn benefits the human services provider community. Our policy staff also meets regularly with DHS leadership, DDAP and other state agencies, key legislative committees, and legislators/staff, to keep the lines of communication open about issues that deeply affect our members.

### Behavioral Health Blog

RCPA launched our [Behavioral Health blog](#), to write commentary about the most important issues facing substance use disorder and mental health treatment providers in Pennsylvania, providing not only the facts of the situation, but our views and opinions on them.

RCPA looks forward to building on these accomplishments, in order to celebrate additional successes, and to further strengthen the voice of the health and human services community in our Commonwealth.