



Allegany County Health Planning Coalition
Meeting Summary
September 9, 2025

Final Minutes
Updated 11/20/2025

This meeting was held via MS Teams.

INDIVIDUALS PRESENT

Melissa Nething, ACHD
Dr. Jennifer Corder, ACHD
Paula McKenzie, ACHD
Lisa Beardsley, ACHD
Mike Bice, ACHD
Julie Teter, AHEC West
Stacey Blank, UPMC
Mindy Bradshaw, MPC
Jordan Rhoads, ACHD
Lorena de Leon, MPC
Haley Guillot, ACHD
Brian Dicken, ACHD
Carrie Duckworth, ACHD
Susan Stewart, AHEC
Theresa Stahl, ACHD
Susan Walter, TSCHC
Jennifer Ensor, CHA
Jill Evans, UPMC

Libby Harper, Allegany Transit
Maureen Lauder, ACHD
Jim Raley, Archway
Christina Rust, ACHD
Tara Wetherell, MPC
Matt Thomas, MPC
George Townsend, Legal Resource Ctr, UMD
Jennifer Smith, ACHD
Kim Rice, ACPS
Ellie Folk, ACHD
Amanda Hawkin, UMD
Rhonda Pick, FCRC
Heather Aguallo, HRDC
Brian Bailey, Mountain Laurel
Renee Knisely, LMB
Diane Donham
Sarah Bush, CareFirst
Marlene Orantes, UMD

I. INTRODUCTIONS/WELCOME/WIN FOR THE DAY

Stacey welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Theresa Stahl discussed Bounty Boxes through the Allegany County Health Department. We have three local farmers accepting SNAP for these produce boxes and each box contains the produce, recipes, goodies, and a link to a cooking video produced with the help of Allegany College. The program has had great success with a second box give-away planned at George's Creek Elementary School in Lonaconing.

II. ADOPT MINUTES OF JULY 8, 2025

Stacey asked if there were any changes or additions to the July 8, 2025 minutes, hearing none; Susan Stewart made a motion to accept them and Paula McKenzie seconded. The minutes were approved as submitted.

III. PRESENTATION:

Jenn Jeudy, Maryland State Police – A Look at Law Enforcement Initiatives and CST

Jenn was asked to speak about the law enforcement and community partnership to highlight some of the things local law enforcement is actively doing that might not be immediately apparent to the public.

One of the biggest areas of public concern often revolves around investigations and transparency. It's challenging because law enforcement is often unable to discuss certain details or make information public until an investigation reaches a specific stage. Locally they face issues with the "Cumberland on Patrol" Facebook pages, which sometimes misrepresent situations, requiring them to correct inaccuracies.

As a crime scene investigator with 17 years of experience, Jenn has spent most of her career here, originally coming from Baltimore County. While she is a civilian employee, not a state trooper, she works closely with various agencies across the county, including the Maryland State Police, Sheriff's Office, Cumberland Police, Frostburg Police, C31, and the Fire Marshal.

She mentioned that our local C3I unit is the only combined unit of its kind in the state, and they recently celebrated 30 years of operation.

Local police departments offer different programs and events to enhance community relationships:

- The Maryland State Police hosts a Law Enforcement Basketball Tournament during March Madness. This event invites all agencies to compete and typically involves individuals with disabilities. The goal is to raise approximately \$1,000 for the chosen honoree while fostering community engagement with fun competition.
- Previously, an "Explorers" program for young adults aged 14 to 21 interested in law enforcement was available but unfortunately disappeared due to a lack of interest. However, they are considering opportunities to revive this program.
- The "Not So Scary Halloween" event is popular. In 2021, this event attracted over 1,000 attendees to the Trooper 5 helicopter hanger at the Greater Cumberland Airport. They welcome community partners, such as M&T Bank and the local animal shelter, to participate in this event.
- The "Faith and Blue" program aims to connect community faith-based organizations with the police. However, attendance has historically been low due to its November timing, and they are considering adjusting the schedule or exploring ways to boost participation.
- For "National Night Out" in Allegany County, there are typically two separate events, with one hosted by Cumberland police department at the Salvation Army building, and also a county event. The county event has moved locations over the years, from the Country Club Mall to Bel Air and then to Frostburg Pool. This year, it has been suggested that they expand the "Faith and Blue" initiative to other communities such as Lonaconing and Westernport, which could be a valuable step in broadening the outreach.
- Most people are familiar with the Optimist Club's "Shop with a Cop" and the "Fish with a Cop" programs. For "Shop with a Cop," schools select students who could benefit from a positive interaction with police officers. The program aims to identify students who may have experienced traumatic events or have parents who are incarcerated, providing them with a more positive interaction with police officers. The "Fish with a Cop" program is very popular with students. J&J Bait Shop generously donates bait, and the Midland Sportsman Club provides fishing rods for the participants. These programs offer valuable experiences for the students involved, and the community's support is greatly appreciated.
- "Project Connect" is a program that brings together various community organizations. Recently, they organized a backpack giveaway for school supplies, funded by community donations and several officers participated in stuffing toys for the event.
- The APES program offers physical fitness classes located near the Cumberland City Police Department. The City of Cumberland also incorporates law enforcement introductions into its annual summer camps, explaining to camp attendees the different branches of law enforcement. There is also a Citizens Academy where community members can apply and join to learn different aspects of law enforcement.
- The Community Resilience Network focuses on mindfulness and wellness, particularly for law enforcement and public safety personnel. It addresses the wellness needs of groups like Crime Scene investigators, who are often overlooked. The Network also provides burnout training and aims to extend wellness support to EMS and fire departments. Given the finite resources in Allegany County, there's a strong emphasis on working together as a coalition, covering areas such as nutrition, spiritual/faith support, and social work.

Stacey suggested that the information presented today would be valuable to share with the public. One potential approach is for Jenn to receive an invitation to attend and present at upcoming County meetings. Additionally, Susan Walter from Tri-State Community Health Center expressed interest in the focus on wellness for law enforcement, EMS, and fire departments. Tri-State operates two community health centers that offer primary care and behavioral health services, which are provided on a sliding fee scale, ensuring access to care regardless of a patient's ability to pay. Jenn

mentioned Baltimore City has an amazing wellness program for their officers and she is compiling a list of resources for our area and she will include Tri-State.

Autumn Symons, Community School Coordinator, George Creek Elementary School, was unable to present today. She will be invited back to present "It Takes a Village."

IV. RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

Melissa Nething, ACHD, informed the committee about the potential impact of H.R. 1 – The One Big Beautiful Bill. Maryland is projected to see 175,000 individuals lose Medicaid benefits, and a loss of up to \$2.7 billion in federal funding.

To offset these cuts, the CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) will administer the \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), which will distribute \$50 billion to 50 states over a five-year period. Maryland is eligible to receive approximately \$100 million annually from this program. These funds will be distributed between 2026 and 2030, and the Maryland Public Services Department will be applying for this funding. For the RHTP, a rural area includes non-metropolitan counties and outlying metropolitan counties that have no urbanized population of 50,000 or more.

The goals of the RHTP include:

- Make rural America healthy again.
- Sustainable access
- Workforce development
- Innovative care
- Tech innovation

Funding from the RHTP program can be utilized to support any of these goal areas.

Local health departments are being asked to engage with their constituents during the month of September to strategize and gather feedback before September 30. Each county will have a community convening. More information will be provided regarding listening sessions to gather information about the rural community needs.

As of now, the dates being considered for Allegany County's hybrid sessions are as follows:

- Tuesday, 9/23/25 @ 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, 9/24/25 at 3:30 p.m.

Melissa will organize these sessions and encourages everyone to attend and provide input. She will also send out a link to the State Office of Rural Health's website. Once the sessions are completed, she will work to compile information to send to the state in this quick turn-around period.

Brian Bailey stated that hospitals, health systems and primary care associations are coming together to advocate for the RHTP. He put forth the question as to whether there is a central repository or a coordinating body in each state that tracks all these initiatives. It is a bit confusing to get a clear picture right now, and Melissa mentioned she doesn't have information on this subject yet.

V. COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CHIP)

Once the 2022-2025 CHIP updates are complete, it will be uploaded as a PDF to document the Coalition's work over the past three years.

The next CHIP workgroup meeting is scheduled for October 28th at 3:00 p.m. We had our initial meeting on September 23rd and are adjusting the date of the October meeting date for the Rural Health Conference.

VI. COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CHNA)

The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) has been published. Our coalition's previous website is expiring, and all content, including the current and achieved LHIC information, has migrated to Allegany Speaks (www.alleganyspeaks.com).

Please note the following changes:

- Under "MY COMMUNITY," you will now find three dropdown items for:
 - "Allegany County Health Planning Coalition"
 - "Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)" and
 - A drafted "Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)" area,
- The old Allegany County Health Planning Coalition site is directed to www.alleganyspeaks.com/lhic.
- Minutes are listed and available on the coalition page of the website for the public.
- We encourage everyone to create an account and join groups on the new site. We will be updating the groups soon as well.
- A list of key LHIC contacts will be available soon. Please contact Melissa Nething or Carrie Duckworth with any additions or changes to this list.
- Your feedback on the new website is welcome.

VII. UPDATES

• **H.E.A.L MOBILE: Melissa Nething, ACHD**

ACHD is excited to announce the H.E.A.L. Mobile, a new mobile wellness clinic that will soon be on the road. A QR was provided on-screen for attendees to complete a survey. The input will help determine service priorities, target communities, and establish a schedule. This initiative was made possible by a CHRC grant, and ACHD is hoping to expand services in the future. ACHD will attend a few community events before fully launching the scheduled services. Melissa will email a flyer of information out after today's meeting.

Brian Bailey inquired about the clinical level of care in the H.E.A.L. Mobile. Carrie confirmed that most dental services, including fillings, extractions, preventative care, x-rays and cleanings, will be available. Reproductive Health and WIC services will mirror those offered at ACHD.

• **Cancer Committee Update: Ellie Folk, ACHD**

Performance measures for Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties were exceptional, exceeding expectations. Our goals for the next fiscal year have increased.

- Assisted 21 clients with breast cancer diagnostics.
- Did not meet performance measures for CPEST this year but aim to improve next year.
- Provide transportation, support personnel, and language services to clients in need, regardless of income.
- For FY 2026, a new colorectal cancer screening performance measure aims to increase screenings among males. Offer support to clients through screening, result dissemination, and follow-up.
- Referrals are welcome and will be followed up with brochures to enhance outreach efforts.

Susan Walter asked about the department funding and Ellie stated that her department is level-funded, and despite increased performance measures, the funding remains the same. Last year, unspent funds were returned. Monthly reports allow for reallocation to counties in need, and she can request additional funds mid-year through reallocation if necessary.

• **Purple On Demand: Libby Harper, Allegany Transit**

Libby provided an update on the Purple On-Demand (POD) service, which operates in the George's Creek area on Tuesdays and Fridays. This service, which runs starting at 8:30 a.m. if needed, assists residents with doctor appointments, shopping, and other needs. This service is crucial as many forego health services due to transportation barriers. POD does provide

rides home, and all appointments must be completed by 3:30 in order to gather everyone to return to their homes. Libby noted that POD services cannot cross state lines.

Libby will share her contact information with Melissa to be added to the contact list.

- **Maryland Health Literacy Organizational Seal Program: Marlene Orantes, UMD**

Marlene shared information about the Maryland Health Literacy Organizational Seal Program, promoted by the Horowitz Center for Health Literacy at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. More information can be found at this link: <https://umd.app.box.com/s/9wwskzffjr5gara5ethkkud7z1yr9i1n>

- **Healthy Heart Ambassador Program: Paula McKenzie, ACHD**

Paula McKenzie announced that the Healthy Heart Ambassador program has secured funding. Haley Guillot will facilitate the program. Paula will distribute client and provider flyers soon to help control blood pressure.

VIII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on November 18, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. This is a change from our regularly scheduled date of November 11, 2025, due to Veterans Day.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.
Submitted by: Maureen Lauder