



## John Lees, a Member and Family Advocate for the Lehigh Valley

John Lees, LSW, has a unique role with Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania, Inc. as a Member and Family Advocate, with his office located at the Bethlehem Care Management Center.

Fortunately, for the Lehigh Valley HealthChoices Behavioral Health members dealing with mental illness and families coping with children working through their developmental delays such as autism, Mr. Lees is often that “bridge” to help a family or individual through a critical behavioral health situation. He has worked with numerous individuals and families that are experiencing a crisis, having difficulty navigating the healthcare system, need to express a concern or complaint, and more.

Through his training and experience as a licensed social worker, he initially tries to understand the issue from the member’s perspective so that he can identify and present solutions to the member or family while remaining sensitive to their needs and wishes. This approach typically helps the member to become more independent and successful in navigating their care, with his support available as necessary.

Managing consultative phone calls with members, providers, Magellan administrative and clinical staff, local community advocates, county administrators and other partners could be a full-time job for most. However, Mr. Lees continues to find additional time to devote significant attention to participating on several committees that include local stakeholders and other Magellan leadership while also attending local community events and activities, always serving as an advocate for the “member voice.”

One such initiative that Mr. Lees championed was a series of events held in 2016 titled, “Voice to Vision.” These events were an opportunity for members to talk directly with Magellan staff about topics such as customer service, quality, communications, providers, and more. Mr. Lees was a leader of these public forums that provided members with a chance to provide honest feedback and to build relationships with their managed care provider for behavioral health.

Another area of focus for Mr. Lees is to serve as the chair of the Autism Action Committee. This committee is responsible for implementing new and enhanced supports, resources, and services for children with Autism. County leadership, family advocates, community providers, and Magellan staff are on this committee. In late 2016, this committee finalized a comprehensive family navigation guide that is a helpful resource for families attempting to navigate the challenges of raising a child faced with a developmental delay.

Mr. Lees continues to track the trends from his discussions and looks for future opportunities where a member and family advocate can be most successful within Magellan and the healthcare system in general. His impact with the members he helps serves as a real example of a caring professional, one conversation at a time.