

“Building Capacity & Competency”

A Guide to Central PA HCQU Supports and Services

Cheryl L. Callahan, RN Director

clcallahan@geisinger.edu www.geisinger.org/hcqu

What is a HCQU?

Health Care Quality Units

(HCQUs) serve as the entity responsible to county ID programs for the overall health status of individuals receiving services in the county programs. HCQUs work to support and improve the state ID community system by building capacity and competency to meet the physical and behavioral health care needs of people with developmental disabilities living in Pennsylvania. There are eight (8) HCQUs in PA.



Lead County: Northumberland

Partner Counties: Blair, Centre, Columbia/Montour/Snyder/Union, Huntingdon/ Mifflin/Juniata, Lycoming/Clinton, and Schuylkill

What We Offer

- Support for individuals and caregivers by providing **training** and resources to promote safe and healthy lifestyles. Check out our [online virtual training calendar](#).
- **Technical assistance (TA)** such as finding community resources, conducting record reviews, medication reviews, fall risk screenings and more.
- Free [online courses](#) on our website that allow you to receive credit towards your annual human services training requirement.

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED



The HCQU can help provide training and support to new and experienced Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), service providers, adult individuals with disabilities and their families.



Our goal is to help those living in the communities, regardless of ability to be as healthy as possible and participating in community life.



PHYSICAL HEALTH & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TRAININGS

The HCQU offers a wide variety of training topics concerning the physical and behavioral health care of people with IDD. These health literate trainings focus on physical health, behavioral health, relationships, safety, and personal development.

HCQU Registered Nurses provide education for individuals, their families and direct caregivers, healthcare professionals and self-advocates. Trainings can be general overviews or specific to an individual. Trainings do not ensure competency of performance of the topic.

Top requested trainings include but are not limited to: **Skin Integrity/Pressure Injuries, Fall Risk and Prevention, Healthy Eating/Nutrition, Fatal 5, Bowel Management/Constipation, Dysphagia, Sepsis, Dehydration, Alzheimer's/Dementia, Infection Control, Diabetes, Dental Health, Hypertension/Cholesterol, Safe Lifting/Transfers.**

Virtual trainings are scheduled at the convenience of the requestor. Trainings are generated through referral forms specific to their county.

[Central PA HCQU Referral Request Form](#)

for Columbia, Montour, Snyder, Union, Centre, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, Lycoming, Clinton, Northumberland, and Schuylkill counties.

Request trainings or TAs by completing [Blair County HCQU Referral Form](#)

PROMOTING SKIN INTEGRITY PREVENTING PRESSURE INJURIES

Skin integrity and pressure injury prevention is a priority. Education and awareness are the essential building blocks in promoting skin health for people of all ages and in the prevention and management of pressure injuries.

Pressure injuries can be devastating causing not only pain

and distress but can also be life-threatening. Our goal is for staff to have a clear understanding of the potential impact of a pressure injury and the importance of its prevention.

Contact the [HCQU](#) to explore free educational opportunities on skin health and pressure injury prevention.

SIGN UP. LEARN. STAY UPDATED.



The HCQU **Healthy Outcomes** Monthly eNewsletter will be offered quarterly:

- January (winter)
- April (spring)
- July (summer)
- October (fall)

Please visit the HCQU website for training events, announcements, and helpful resources.

[Subscribe here.](#)



MEDICATION REVIEW

The HCQU can help provide help to supports coordinators if a change in an individual's behavior or physical condition may be the side effect of a medication.

We understand that non clinicians on an individual's health care team have limited medication knowledge and are not expected to know all the side effects of various medication.

Contact the [HCQU](#) to provide a medication review for potential interactions.

FATAL FIVE FOCUS

Medical emergencies are inevitable, but some can potentially be avoided through building awareness and offering preventative education. Research shows there are five health conditions that often go unrecognized and are linked to serious illness and preventable deaths in community-based settings. They are referred to as the Fatal Five.

The top five conditions are:

- **ASPIRATION**
- **CONSTIPATION**
- **DEHYDRATION**
- **SEIZURES**
- **INFECTION/SEPSIS**

Support staff play a vital role in the lives of the people they care for. Knowing how to prevent, recognize and seek treatment for select medical situations will not only improve the quality of their care, but will also save lives.

Request an instructor led Fatal Five training or view the [online training calendar](#). In-depth trainings on each specific medical condition are also available.

This HCQU training is an ODP approved training for Waiver Provider Qualification Requirements.



Free [HCQU Online Courses](#)

We are here for your educational credit needs! Our courses are great for DSPs, or anyone interested in expanding their knowledge of different healthcare issues. We offer health-related courses on aging, mental health, nutrition, safety and more. Available courses:

[Aging and Developmental Disabilities](#) [Allergy Awareness](#) [Alzheimer's](#) [Bloodborne Pathogens](#)
[Bowel Management](#) [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) [Dehydration](#) [Dental Health](#) [GERD](#)
[Menopause](#) [Skin Health and Pressure Injuries](#) [Sepsis](#) [Urinary Tract Infection](#)

Online Course Testimonials:

"I like the new format!"

"Well Done."

"Well written, good information."

Help with Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST)

[Central PA HCQU
Health Risk Screening
Tool \(HRST\): FAQ and
OVERVIEW](#)

Screening individuals with IDD early to determine risks to their health is essential for avoiding these risks and helping people with IDD live longer, healthier lives.

“The [HRST](#) is a predictive tool that helps monitor the risk of illness and health destabilization in vulnerable populations in real time.

This allows providers and supporters to act proactively, addressing problems in their earliest stages and better establishing healthcare needs.”- [IntellectAbility](#)

Each HCQU has designated RNs to oversee HRST functions in their respective region.

The HCQU can offer assistance and training to providers and Support Coordinators (SCs) as needed (this can be done in collaboration with HRST clinical staff).

[PA HRST Protocol
Update](#)

HRST Gatekeepers

The HCQU has designated HRST “gatekeepers.” The gatekeeper’s role consists of communicating with support staff from [IntellectAbility](#) to have HRST users added, removed or to communicate changes using the [HRST User Request Spreadsheet](#).

Contact your Central PA HRST Gatekeepers when:

- You need to **add** a new employee into the HRST database
- You need to **remove** an employee from the HRST database
- If there have been any [changes](#) to an employee’s email address or viewing privileges

Beginning in 2025, email gatekeepers at:
hrstgatekeepers@geisinger.edu



RECORD REVIEWS

Record reviews can provide valuable information about an individual’s medical background, past experiences, and behavioral history.

HCQU nurses provide a comprehensive review of medical, psychiatric, and social information. This review can assist staff in advocating for the individual’s optimal health care.

HCQU staff also offer suggestions and provide resources to the supporting team. Contact the [HCQU](#).

FALL PREVENTION

As we age, there are natural processes that occur that raise our risk for falling. However, there are also conditions and factors that may occur earlier in life that increase risk. For adults with ID and Autism, these risk factors appear earlier in their life.

Direct support professionals (DSPs) are uniquely positioned to actively identify a person with disabilities' risks for falling and to support them to get assistance and teach them prevention strategies. *Falls are preventable.*

Contact the [HCQU](#) to discuss **Fall Prevention trainings** and the benefits of **HCQU Fall Risk Screenings**.

Fall risk screening takes a comprehensive approach for the individual to reduce the chances of falling, reduce the risk of injury and maintaining the highest level of mobility as possible.

It helps to gather information about the person's health history and environmental factors while addressing modifiable risk factors. This assists the health care practitioner in mitigating the risk while supporting and educating the individual and support persons.

STAFF CONTACT LIST



DISCLAIMER

All training information is intended to be an overview, or a review of information previously provided by a Health Care Provider. Trainings do not replace medical advice.

Consult medical professionals for questions and concerns specific to training topics.

Director Cheryl Callahan, RN, ccallahan@geisinger.edu

Training Coordinator Patty Brofee, RN plbrofee@geisinger.edu

Data Support Analyst Kristy Campbell kacampbell@geisinger.edu

Blair County

Sandra Corrigan, RN, CDDN scorrigan@geisinger.edu

Centre County Eileen Musgrave RN, epmusgrave1@geisinger.edu

Columbia, Montour, Snyder & Union Counties (CMSU)

Laura Aungst, RN, ljaungst@geisinger.edu

Huntingdon, Mifflin & Juniata Counties (HMJ)

Traci Dunkelberger, RN tjdunkelberger@geisinger.edu

Lycoming-Clinton Counties

Eileen Musgrave, RN epmusgavel@geisinger.edu

Northumberland County

Amy Weidner, RN ajweidner1@geisinger.edu

Schuylkill County

Amy Weidner, RN ajweidner1@geisinger.edu

