

# ACT 62

On July 1, 2009 Pennsylvania's Autism Insurance Law (Act 62) went into effect. Act 62 requires that some large group insurers cover the diagnosis and treatment of autism and autism spectrum disorders for persons under the age of 21. Depending on their insurance coverage, some families were impacted by the law in July while others were affected in January 2010.

Fortunately, there is a lot of very helpful information available. Below readers will find organizations and websites with accurate and up to date information. Call (or visit the websites) of these organizations to find information on:

- Who is covered under the law;
- What services insurance companies are required to provide; and
- What you can do if your child is denied autism-related services by your insurance company.

The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) has a very informative website that has sections created just for families. Information on this website is designed to inform, guide, and assist families about Act 62. There is also a Frequently Asked Questions and Answers section. (Subjects include general issues, covered services, private insurance, qualified providers and licensing).

Go to: <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/Autism/Act62> for information and updates concerning Act 62. They also offer an Act 62 E- mailbox that you can write to with questions: [ra-inautism@state.pa.us](mailto:ra-inautism@state.pa.us)

The Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania (DRN) is monitoring the new law.

You can e-mail questions or concerns to the DRN by visiting their website at: <http://drnpa.org/contact>  
You can also contact them using the following contact information: Harrisburg Office  
[drnpa-hbg@drnpa.org](mailto:drnpa-hbg@drnpa.org)  
1-800-692-7443 [Voice]  
1-877-375-7139 [TDD]

Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP) has a very informative website. On their website visitors can find information on Act 62. PHLP is especially interested in learning about problems families encounter in their efforts at getting services under Act 62.

Their website is: [www.phlp.org](http://www.phlp.org)  
They also offer a toll free helpline: 1-800-274-3258 (voice)  
1-866-236-6310 (TTY)

You can also get help via e-mail at [staff@phlp.org](mailto:staff@phlp.org). DPW, PA Insurance Department and PA Department of State are working closely together to monitor the implementation of the new law. They will communicate with families and other stakeholders as this new law goes into effect.

CBHNP, DPW, DRN and PHLP are all working to monitor the changes. We are especially interested in identifying and addressing problems during the transition period.

## NEWS ABOUT CBHNP

An *In-Plan Service* is a service that is included in the behavioral HealthChoices list of covered services. CBHNP pays for these services.

*Peer Support Services* is an *In-Plan service* available to CBHNP Members who are age 18 and over.

### Peer Support Services

Peer Support Services (PSS) are person-centered and recovery focused services. Services are provided by people who are current or former consumers of behavioral health services. These individuals are trained and certified to offer support and assistance in helping others in their recovery. They also help people to become involved within their communities. PSS includes activities such as advocacy, education, developing natural supports, support of work or other meaningful activity of the person's choosing, and crisis support. They help people better use the services that are available to them and can help coordinate and connect people with service providers.

### More about Peer Support Services!

- Peer Support Services are based on the principles of consumer choice!
- Of great importance is the involvement of consumers in their recovery process.
- Peer Support Services are based on the belief that people with mental illness need opportunities to identify and choose for themselves, their desired roles in the community (These roles are related to living, learning, working and/or social environments).

### The purpose of Peer Support is:

- To provide opportunities for individuals receiving services to direct their own recovery and advocacy process
- To teach and support acquisition and utilization of skills needed to facilitate the individuals recovery
- To increase consumer knowledge of available service options and choices
- To encourage the use of natural resources within the community
- To help the consumer develop a sense of wellness and self worth

Service goals are based on individual needs and personal dreams and desires. These dreams and desires can be in the areas of: wellness and recovery, education/employment, crisis support, housing, socialization, self determination and individual advocacy.

Call CBHNP toll-free to find out more about Peer Support Services. Use the CBHNP number in this newsletter for your county. This is a free call!

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[www.cbhnp.org](http://www.cbhnp.org)



## NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK!

By now you should have received your NEW and UPDATED Member Handbook in the mail. The handbook will have much of the same helpful information as before. It will also contain new information about:

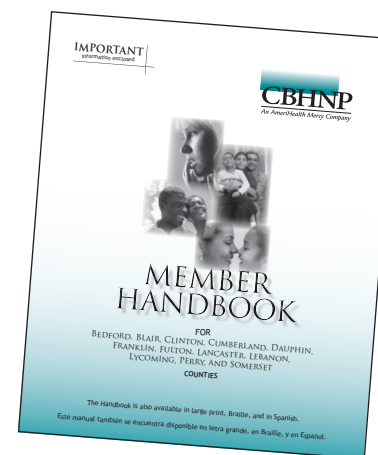
- Services available to you
- Laws that may affect you and/or your loved ones
- Helpful contact and phone numbers for the county you live in
- Tools to help you find the services you need

Be sure to be on the lookout for the handbook. **The handbook will have a new cover and it will still be available in Audio, Large Print, Braille, and in Spanish.**

As always, if you have questions about anything in the handbook, you can call us for an explanation. If there is anything you do not understand or want to understand better, we have staff available to help you.

If you have not received the new handbook, please call the CBHNP number for your county to let us know. We will be sure to mail one out to you.

(The number for your county can be found on the front of this newsletter.)



The Premier Resource for Behavioral Health & Human Service Solutions  
[www.cbhnp.org](http://www.cbhnp.org)

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# Member NEWSLETTER

Managing TO care

## CBHNP

An AmeriHealth Mercy Company

Spring 2010 | Volume 6 | Issue 1

A NEWSLETTER FOR CBHNP MEMBERS AND FAMILIES

## SUPPORT GROUPS

*"I feared that I was alone in this ... I never knew others were coping... and coping well with a situation just like mine!" - parent participant of a support group*



Parents/families of children and adults with mental health or substance abuse issues know how challenging and emotional every day can be. The availability of a support group where people of similar situations can come together, share and learn from one another's experiences has been a "life line" to many. It is at these support groups that people can be "real", seek solutions, find out about things that have helped others, vent, and find new and helpful resources - all to help them manage themselves or their families and/or care for someone who is living with a behavioral health problem.

CBHNP is invited throughout the year to outreach to support groups in the communities we serve. We provide information about our company and the behavioral HealthChoices program. We are able to listen to concerns of individuals and families and often are able to work together to work out solutions. It is in these settings that we often hear comments about the benefits of belonging to a support group.

*"It is wonderful knowing that we are not alone and that others manage and improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and loved ones."*

Situations and problems can be unique. Different support groups offer different things such as helpful newsletters, fun activities, valuable information, guest speakers, and simply an opportunity to make friends. These are just some of the ways individuals and families benefit from belonging to a support group.

### There are many benefits to joining a support group:

#### You receive support.

A support group provides a group of people who truly understand you. With them you can laugh and cry over the day-to-day turmoil of living with the issues that affect you or a loved one.

#### You are educated.

Valuable information is shared among support group members. From "favorite" doctors in the area to tips for locating and keeping needed services, support groups are a wealth of firsthand information.

#### You can evolve from being a person in need to helping another in need.

Support groups give you the chance to do something positive on behalf of others, whether it's educating, promoting awareness, or advocating for others.

Continued on page 4

## SPECIAL INTEREST ARTICLES

Support Groups .....	1
Rethinking Drinking .....	2
What is Stalking? Is It Happening to You? .....	2
Act 62 .....	3
News About CBHNP .....	3
Helping Teens Draw a Digital and Dating Violence Line.....	4
Getting Help from Abuse—Protection from Abuse Orders....	5
New Member Handbook.....	6

## MEMBER SERVICE NUMBERS

Call the toll-free Member Services number listed next to your county to talk with a representative about behavioral health services.

Capital Area:  
Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon & Perry  
1-888-722-8646

NorthCentral Region:  
Bedford/Somerset: 1-866-773-7891  
Blair: 1-866-773-7892  
Franklin/Fulton: 1-866-773-7917  
Lycoming/Clinton: 1-866-773-7991  
1-800-654-5984 TTY or 711 PA Relay

Call the Member Service number for your county with any questions you might have about information in this newsletter.

## RETHINKING DRINKING

Rethinking Drinking is a website and booklet from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). It provides evidence-based information and interactive tools about risky drinking patterns, signs of an alcohol problem, and ways to help people cut back or quit drinking.

You can visit the site and/or get the booklet at: <http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov>

You can write and ask for the booklet and other information. Direct your letter to:

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)  
5635 Fishers Lane, MSC 9304  
Bethesda, MD 20892

## WHAT IS STALKING? IS IT HAPPENING TO YOU?

Stalking is following someone in a way that causes the victim to feel afraid. It can cause serious emotional distress.

Here are some examples of stalking behavior:

- Following someone on foot or by car
- Watching someone at work, home, or school
- Sending unwanted emails or text messages
- Making unwanted telephone calls
- Leaving unwanted cards, flowers, or gifts

Stalking can happen to anyone. Stalking often happens when a person tries to leave a relationship.

Many stalking victims think they did something to deserve it. This is not true.

Data shows that stalking often happens when you are leaving an abusive partner.

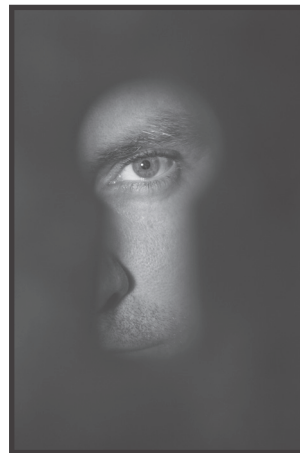
According to the Stalking Resource Center:

- 59% of women victims are stalked by someone from their past
- 30% of victims are stalked by someone from their past

Stalking is a crime in Pennsylvania. There are two basic parts to the crime.

- The stalker must complete at least two acts of unwanted stalking behavior. **It does not matter when they happened.**
- The victim must have a **reasonable fear** of serious injury or a **lot of emotional distress.**

A Protection From Abuse Order (PFA) can be an important tool for stalking victims. It allows the police to arrest the stalker, even if they did not see the stalking. The process for getting a PFA is different in every county. A domestic violence advocate can tell you more about PFA's and how to protect yourself from a stalker.



## SUPPORT GROUPS

*Continued from page 1*

Support groups help family and loved ones.

Spouses, parents, and children need and benefit from support too.

### Finding Support Groups

In your own community, there are a variety of sources for finding a support group to meet your needs. Often, local newspapers (or the newspaper's website) offer free listings for a variety of support groups. They may include a meeting schedule or a contact phone number. You can also check resource centers at local hospitals, colleges or schools.

Providers can also sometimes help connect you to a group. If you are looking for a faith oriented group, ask your religious leader or check the bulletin board at your place of worship.

For most local or community based groups, "word of mouth" is a great way to find out what is available.

Your County MH/MR program may also help you locate a support group that is right for you. (The phone number for the MH/MR Program in your county can be found in the back of your Member Handbook and in your local phone book.)

CBHNP is also available to help you locate a support group. Call us at the Member Service number for your county. This number is located on the first page of this newsletter. We will do all we can to point you in the right direction.

Support Groups can provide help, understanding, and support during difficult times. A good support group can be a genuine blessing for consumers, their family members and friends. Finding a good support is not always an easy thing to do.

Ask around ... often a little detective work can yield great results.

## HELPING TEENS DRAW A DIGITAL AND DATING VIOLENCE LINE

Digital communication a central part of teens' lives. A new campaign has been launched to help them recognize digital dating abuse and take steps to prevent it. [ThatsNotCool.com](http://ThatsNotCool.com) is designed to help teens understand that their cell phones, instant messaging and online accounts are a part of them. If someone they are dating is controlling, being disrespectful or pressuring them in those spaces, that's not cool. The website provides online forums for teens to talk about being harassed by text, constant instant messaging, and spreading rumors on the web. The forums also address sharing pictures that should be private. They also tackle someone looking at cell phone or online information without the teens OK.

The campaign helps teens to identify when they need help. When does caring become controlling? When does affection becomes obsession? When does talking become stalking? The site hosts guest videos from YouTube. It also provides info on how to get help for themselves and friends.

A second campaign offers information on knowing the warning signs of dating violence. Designed by teens, [SeeltandStopIt.org](http://SeeltandStopIt.org) gives them tools for how to stop it. It also has ideas about making a difference in their schools and where they live. Research show most teens are clear about dating abuse but many are less clear about the gray areas of actions that indicate warning signs, such as harassment or emotional abuse. Most teens say they would get involved if they saw physical abuse. But, they are less comfortable about intervening when the abuse is less clear. Their instincts tell them it is wrong but they need tools and resources to intervene.

If you or someone you know needs help, call:

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY for the Deaf)

Or visit: [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

Teens can also call the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

1-866-331-9474

1-866-331-8453 (TTY for the Deaf)

Teens can also join online chats at [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

Help is available 24 hours a day in English and Spanish and many other languages.

All contact with the hotlines is free and confidential.



[www.cbhnp.org](http://www.cbhnp.org)

## GETTING HELP FOR ABUSE - PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDERS

A **Protection from Abuse Order (PFA)** is a court order that protects you and your children from an abuser. It is a civil order that you file on your own behalf against an intimate partner, family or household member who is hurting you. Getting a PFA is just one part of a larger safety plan. An advocate at a local domestic violence program can help you decide what should be in your plan.

Some examples of relationships that qualify as family and household members for the purposes of a PFA are:

- Spouses and ex-spouses
- Persons who have lived as spouses
- Parents and children
- Persons related by blood or marriage, including siblings
- Current or former sexual or intimate partners, which may include dating relationships
- Same gender couples

The **PFA Order** process usually starts by filing a paper called a "petition" at the courthouse. The petition is how you tell the court why you feel you need protection. The petition describes the abuse you have suffered. It also describes the protection you want from the court. The courthouse has people who can help you fill out the petition.

A judge will consider your requests. The judge may grant or deny all or some of them.

You can ask the judge to order:

- the abuser to stop threatening or abusing, you and your children
- the abuser to stop harassing or stalking you and your children
- eviction of the abuser from your home or residence
- your new address be kept confidential
- temporary custody of your children
- temporary child or spousal support
- reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses that were caused by acts of the abuser
- the abuser not to have contact with you, your children, or family members
- that the abuser not contact you at work or school
- the abuser to turn over weapons
- other things like requesting the return of your pet, car keys, or important papers

Every county has a different process for a victim to get a PFA. Please call your local domestic violence program for information about your county. They can talk to you about your rights and your county process. They can help you plan for your safety.

You can find your local domestic violence program phone number in the telephone book. Look in the blue pages under abuse.

You can also go to <http://www.pcadv.org/Find-Help/Domestic-Violence-Services-By-County.asp>.

If you are worried about your safety and you need to talk, call us.

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Para recibir este boletín en español, llame al número de teléfono de Servicios para el Miembro de su condado.

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