

## **BERGEN'S PROMISE**

### **ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

#### **POLICY AND PLAN**

##### Policy

Bergen's Promise shall not exclude from participation, association, deny benefits to, or subject to discrimination any person solely by reason of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, religion, marital status, veteran status or disability. Bergen's Promise will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate all individuals with disabilities or challenges to full access.

Bergen's Promise mission is *Healthy Families, Safe at Home*. In support of that mission, Bergen's Promise recognizes the importance of accessibility to all individuals with a variety of mental health and wellness needs. To that end, Bergen's Promise has made reasonable efforts to ensure that its offices are barrier free in accordance with applicable laws and guidelines and that community-based services are accessible and provided in accordance with Wraparound standards of care by professionally trained and qualified personnel.

This plan shall identify access barriers including physical/architectural, environmental, attitudinal, financial, and barriers to employment, communication, technology, community supports and transportation barriers, as well as any other barriers identified by the persons served, personnel and/or other stakeholders. Bergen's Promise will strive to make all reasonable accommodations to remove barriers and improve access whenever possible. This plan applies to all stakeholders, including but not limited to youth, families, providers, community partners, staff and board members. The Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and revised by department heads and approved by the Quality Council on an annual basis. Any changes to the policy shall also be submitted to the Board for approval.

##### Access to Services

Bergen's Promise provides services to families and youth ages 5 to 21, with serious behavioral health challenges, substance abuse issues and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Youth with chronic co-occurring behavioral and specific medical health issues are also served through an enhanced medical care coordination component called Behavioral Health Home. Office hours are Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5p.m.; however, Care Managers meet with youth and families in their homes or communities based on family availability and convenience, which may be outside of these hours. Additionally, Bergen's Promise offers a 24/7 emergency on-call phone service designed to help families in crisis. Families in crisis can call our office number at 201-712-1170 for support and de-escalation. All of the foregoing is intended to maximize family access to services.

Bergen's Promise will strive to make all reasonable accommodations to remove barriers and improve access to its services including office operations and the delivery of community-based service in accordance to the Wraparound philosophy of care. Due to the community-based nature of service

delivery, Bergen's Promise cannot fully ensure that all family residences or provider locations where services may be delivered are barrier free at all times.

Bergen's Promise has assessed its office for compliance with all applicable regulations and guidelines. Bergen's Promise is not responsible for the architectural accessibility requirements of the office building in its entirety and therefore cannot remove any existing architectural barriers; however, Bergen's Promise will make reasonable efforts to improve workspace accessibility as requested by employees and as outlined in our ADA Statement Policy per the Employee Handbook. Bergen's Promise shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that its facilities are accessible to all stakeholders. Building ownership ensures compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. The Agency ensures compliance with all applicable laws and regulations as outlined in the Agency's leasing agreement.

#### Building/Office Access (Environment and Architecture)

Bergen's Promise's office is located at 3 University Plaza in Hackensack. There are a limited number of direct support services rendered in the office, however meetings and events may occasionally be offered to youth and families in one of our conference rooms.

The Bergen's Promise office is equipped with stairwells, elevators, public spaces, offices and workstations that are easily accessible. In addition, there are several accessible locations for easy turn around for a person using a wheelchair to reverse direction. All doors in public spaces and private office spaces have at least the minimum clearance allowable. All interior doors are light weight and door handles are accessible with a closed fist. All public rooms, including general office spaces, employee kitchens, file rooms, conferences rooms, and bathrooms have accessible aisles and pathways to materials and services.

Emergency egresses include both flashing and audible signals to ensure safe notification of emergency situations to persons with visual or hearing impairments. All emergency egress exits have appropriate signage displayed from the ceiling with adequately sized lettering and color contrasting to meet standards for individuals with low vision and or in the event of building power outages. Heating and cooling systems are controlled by the leasing agent. All light switches and electrical outlets are within required height requirements.

The majority of office furniture, seating and tables are wheelchair accessible. Tabletops and desks are between 28 and 34 inches high. The corporate-office conference and training room tables and entry ways meet ADA accessibility requirements.

Restrooms are shared by all tenants within the building and meet ADA accessibility requirements. Signage utilizes easily identifiable symbols, raised large printed, contrasting color and Braille.

Bergen's Promise does not provide public telephone services or drinking fountains. However, the building is equipped with drinking fountains that meet ADA accessibility requirements. Bergen's Promise provides water coolers that are wheelchair accessible within the break rooms of each of the offices.

Bergen's Promise addresses environmental barriers such as noise level, personal privacy and confidentiality of information. The organization's office is designed to limit exposure of confidential

information to unauthorized personnel or visitors. Such physical controls include combination locks for access to file rooms, designated closed-door meeting/conference rooms, designated employee mailboxes and white noise machines.

The Bergen's Promise office is clean, brightly lit and decorated with the comfort of employees, families and other stakeholders in mind.

### Transportation

Bergen's Promise services are primarily delivered in participants' homes and communities, thereby guaranteeing access to the full range of services. In addition, Agency office locations are easily accessible via public transportation. Bergen's Promise also operates a fleet of vehicles, providing additional transportation support to meet the needs of individuals served. Bergen's Promise assists in providing linkage to community-based services which further develop skills in utilizing public transportation and/or alternative community resources. In the event that an individual uses a wheelchair, vendors with accessible vehicles are utilized.

### Attitudes and Awareness

All Bergen's Promise employees are required to participate in trainings designed to ensure awareness and sensitivity to the effects of stigma and attitudinal barriers associated with socioeconomic, behavioral health, addiction, intellectual/ development disabilities and wellness/medical needs. Services are provided in a dignified and professional manner based on the needs of youth and families utilizing a strength-based and person-centered Wraparound approach to care.

Employees participate in outreach efforts to reduce attitudinal barriers and promote effective collaborative services within the community. These efforts include, but are not limited to, regular face to face and Child Family Team meetings with the persons served, ongoing Quality Assurance meetings with community providers and stakeholders, membership in professional advisory committees, community and public education activities, as well as Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Affiliation Agreements with community providers.

Further, the Agency has enlisted a diverse group of staff members at all levels to review and revise youth and family documents to ensure person-centered language and ease of use. Youth and family feedback and input is solicited via annual, enrollment, discharge and post-enrollment surveys, QA phone calls and via the CFT process. In late 2018, management staff began a series of in-home interviews with volunteer families to assess the quality of service delivery as well as service gaps. This effort is ongoing.

Lastly, through its collaboration with the Bergen County Stigma Free Initiative, and the promotion thereof on the Agency-sponsored ResourceNet, the Agency continues to work to break through attitudinal barriers to mental health care services.

### Financial Considerations

For youth and families referred to Bergen's Promise for care management services, no youth or family is denied services based on individual socioeconomic status. In addition, low income families with specific co-occurring medical conditions may qualify for an additional health and wellness component.

Regardless of income level, active participation in Medicaid is required to maintain CMO enrollment. Care Managers assist families with the completion of the Medicaid application at referral and during renewal periods as needed. Additionally, the Agency has added a second Medicaid Coordinator position to provide additional assistance in order for families to access entitlements and benefit programs.

Bergen's Promise provides linkages to affordable, sustainable resources for continued success after graduation from service.

### Employment

Bergen's Promise has established non-discriminatory hiring practices and a written ADA Statement prohibiting discrimination in its hiring practice (see Employee Handbook).

Bergen's Promise provides ongoing assistance to youth and families with linkage to employment and vocational training through individualized service planning. Bergen's Promise provides linkage to youth and families in need of transportation and/or assistance in accessing public transportation to and from work programs and/or places of employment as identified.

### Communication

Bergen's Promise has implemented Personnel Policies regarding Equal Employment Opportunity, which includes reasonable accommodations upon request. Bergen's Promise has also implemented a policy whereby families understand our non-discriminatory practices as they relate to families and personnel (see Rights and Responsibilities of Youth and Families). Bergen's Promise has implemented policies for persons served to request reasonable accommodations, including, but not limited to the following: literacy needs, translation of and/or large print adaptation of forms, live translation services and collaboration with ASL interpretive services as needed (see Rights and Responsibilities of Youth and Families). Additionally, Braille, text-to-speech, TDD/TRS services or other access-enhancing materials (that continue to evolve with new technologies) will be made available to the public and individuals served upon request. Documents posted to our website can be translated into more than 100 languages using Google Translate online.

### Technology

Bergen's Promise provides accommodations to stakeholders who require non-electronic versions of documents and, to the extent possible, technology to access electronic-only resources. The Agency website has a persistent Accessibility Menu icon that provides tools to stakeholders that have visual or hearing impairments. The Agency also provides personnel with information via an emergency notification system as needed, ensuring that messages are received.

### Community Integration

Bergen's Promise makes every effort to ensure that youth and families are linked with community resources and supports. If any barriers are identified the Agency will ensure that all efforts are made to secure reasonable accommodations. Barriers and gaps identified for access to community-based services will be analyzed and Agency leadership will work collaboratively with system and community-based partners to address barriers and gaps as identified.

### Identifying Needs

Bergen's Promise assesses stakeholder needs in a variety of ways. Following referral to Bergen's Promise, Strength and Needs Assessments, Family Crisis (Safety) Plans and Individual Service Plans are developed with all persons served in order to identify needs and strategies, including accessibility barriers and solutions. In addition, per the Rights and Responsibilities of Youth and Families policy, families may request accommodation either informally or via the Agency's Grievance Procedure. Family Satisfaction Surveys are completed annually, and Quality Assurance Calls are conducted on an ongoing basis. Family needs are also discussed in weekly Team and Supervision meetings.

In addition, Bergen's Promise has developed policies and procedures to ensure that reasonable accommodations are made for employees per individual request (Employee Handbook, Section 8.10 is incorporated herein by reference).

In the event that an accessibility barrier has been identified by the Agency or a youth, family member, employee, and/or other stakeholder, Bergen's Promise has established protocols for the reporting and resolving such barriers and implementing solutions (See Report of Quality Concern). These action plans include areas for improvement, timelines for completion, and when applicable, identification of resources.

### Review and Remediation Plan

Essential to the review and remediation plan is documentation pursuant to the Quality Improvement Process. In sum, each individual accessibility challenge shall be documented by relevant staff and resolved to the best of that individual's satisfaction. An Agency action and/or improvement plan shall be proposed by the Committee to the Quality Council for approval. Changes in policy shall be approved by the Board.

The following areas have been identified by the Committee for improvement:

<b>Analysis/Goal</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Action Plan/ Resources</b>	<b>Leadership/ Department</b>
Identifying access barriers experienced by persons served	Ongoing	Education, Advocacy (e.g. I/DD, BPS, MRSS, limited availability) and Reports of Quality Concerns	CR, CM
Replicating successful access to services by persons served	Ongoing	Survey Persons Served	CR, QA, RoQCs
Identifying access barriers experienced by community partners	Ongoing (e.g. building)	Building management	CR, Dept. Heads, Office Mgt., Technology Committee

	access, parking)		
Identifying access barriers experienced by providers	Ongoing (e.g. building access, parking)	MOUs; Meet and Greets; Provider Collaboration Meetings	Community Resources
Identifying access barriers experienced by board members	Ongoing	Board Meetings; Bylaws	Executive Management Leadership Team
BHH access barriers experienced by youth and families whose income exceeds Medicaid eligibility	Ongoing	Director of Health Services and Care Manager consultation	Director of Health Services and Care Manager consultation
BHH access barriers experienced by youth who do not have a qualifying medical condition	Ongoing	Director of Health Services and Care Manager consultation	Director of Health Services and Care Manager consultation
Availability of large print and text to speech for web-based Agency content. Braille versions are available upon request	Ongoing	Accessibility Menu on the agency website offers tools for those with visual or hearing impairments such as large print and read text	CR, Tech Committee
Needs of the LGBTQI community	Ongoing	Community Partnerships for Staff Education and Collaboration  Local resources posted on the Agency-sponsored ResourceNet  Public Restroom Accommodation	Community Resources and Office Administration
Attitudinal Barriers of Staff (practices and attitudes that may serve as barriers to service, employee satisfaction and community relationships)	Ongoing	Training and review of terminology, language, literature, wraparound implementation, committees – Big Ideas Society	Committees (all)

Learn about access to TDD/TRS services (does our answering service have access to same?)	Ongoing	Language Line and CSOC	Technology Committee, Exec
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