

Testimony To The HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE

Jim Rehder, Chairman

Region II Mental Health Board

Accomplishments and Successes

Conducted Behavioral Health Services Survey and are currently continuing that effort:

- Conducted by Boise State MSW Students under the direction of Instructor Eleanor Downey.
- The survey was sent to 109 people and 38% response rate.
- The project's Executive Summary is available upon request.
- The survey is again being conducted this Fall. Results of this round of survey will be published.

Accomplishments and Successes

Constructed IRIS Apartments:

- Iris Apartments is a 10-unit apartment project developed and operated to provide transitional housing units for individuals with mental illness.
- The building also has one short-term respite room.
- This project is designed to help people get back into the regular commercial housing market by providing a transition from homelessness to independent living.
- In the past year, utilization of the 8 apartments fluctuated from month to month (as one would anticipate) with an overall average of 94.45% of the bed days being filled for the complex.

Accomplishments and Successes

Coordinated and Facilitated Respite Care Training:

- The Region II Mental Health Board worked with the Children's Mental Health program and Idaho Federation for Families to offer Respite Care Training to families across Region II.
- As these families were trained they became part of a network coordinated by the Idaho Federation of Families to insure that respite care was available for families of children with mental illness.

Accomplishments and Successes

Initiated Tele-Psychiatry System:

- The Region II Mental Health board initiated a tele-psychiatry program which was developed by St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center through contracts with Kootenai Behavioral Health and Lourdes Health Network of Pasco, Washington.
- This program provides medication management and psychiatric oversight for both children and adults.
- This program has helped fill the gap for Psychiatrists in Region II.

Accomplishments and Successes

Working with Regional Advisory Committee to prepare for Behavioral Health Transformation:

- Provided the BH Health Transformation Coop with a model of transformation that would positively impact rural regions like Region II.
- Meeting with RAC to develop board infrastructure
- Developing framework for community network of care

Accomplishments and Successes

Developed and Implemented Children's Mental Health Coalition Pilot Project:

- This is a project where a Mental Health curriculum is taught in the Region's Middle Schools with the purpose of raising awareness and decreasing stigma.
- Led by former State Representative Liz Chavez
- Using curriculum from the National Institute of Health

Challenges and Concerns

Increasing number of individuals requiring behavioral health services:

- Stretching law enforcement, hospitals, and court system resources
- Increased demand for court-ordered assessments stretching DHW-Behavioral Health resources

Challenges and Concerns

Acuity of those needing behavioral health services is rising. This rise in acuity requires higher, more costly levels of intervention such as hospitalization or intensive outpatient services:

- Higher level of acuity correlates with increased number of community hospitalizations.
- Higher level of acuity requires longer stay in State Hospital to stabilize
- Higher level of acuity makes discharge from State Hospital difficult because there are so few community-based placements equipped to maintain higher acuity patients safely.

Challenges and Concerns

Acuity of those needing behavioral health services is rising. This rise in acuity requires higher, more costly levels of intervention such as hospitalization or intensive outpatient services:

- Longer stay at State Hospital means fewer beds available for referrals from Communities.
- When Communities are unable to move patients to State Hospitals as needed, the community resources that should be available to address crisis, voluntary treatment, and ongoing development of community-based mental health programs and services are depleted.

Challenges and Concerns

Need for suicide prevention services:

- 290 completed suicides in Idaho in 2010
- 4th highest suicide rate (2009) in the nation
- Suicide attempts cost Idaho an estimated \$36 million per year (\$850,000 in medical care alone)
- Lifetime productivity loss in Idaho due to death by suicide is \$343 million annually

Challenges and Concerns

Decrease in funding for behavioral health services:

- Need for long-term care for seniors that addresses behavioral health concerns.
- Need for social detox center
- Hospitals experiencing financial loss when providing behavioral health care
- Loss of funding for behavioral health services for our prison population

Challenges and Concerns

Shortage of qualified behavioral health services providers:

- Adult and Children's Psychiatrists
- Fewer agencies willing to accept Medicare/Medicaid patients
- More agencies, group homes, certified family homes are closing their doors due to inadequate funding.
- Contributes to longer wait times for patients needing behavioral health placement and services.

Challenges and Concerns

Need for school-based behavioral health services:

- Will Medicaid continue to fund under Managed Care
- Need for partnership with Department of Education and local school districts to develop plan to address need for school-based mental health services

QUESTIONS?