



Eastern Region Public Mental Health Planning Project

April – December 2006



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The Eastern Region of Missouri has a long-standing commitment to provide services and programs to individuals and families affected by mental health and substance abuse issues (referred to as behavioral health). In order to strengthen the current behavioral health safety net system, stakeholders joined together to create recommendations for a more responsive and coordinated system for acute adult behavioral health care.

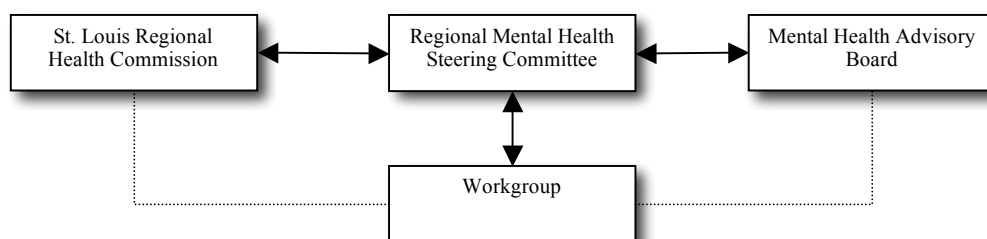
During this first phase of work, stakeholders were interviewed to identify challenges and opportunities in the behavioral health safety net system, the current processes for patient flow and coordinating care across behavioral health system providers were assessed, best practices and alternative models were identified, and detailed recommendations for improving the safety net behavioral health system were developed. This document includes a summary and written record of all of the efforts noted above.

Who is involved in the process?

Organizations and individual stakeholders from around the region are involved in the planning efforts. The project includes mental health and alcohol/drug abuse service providers, the Missouri Department of Mental Health, physical health providers, consumers, consumer advocates, community leaders, law enforcement representatives, drug/mental health courts and community organizations. Please see the following pages for a list of individuals and organizations involved in this project.

The Eastern Region includes St. Charles County, Franklin County, Jefferson County, Lincoln County, St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and Warren County.

The following chart illustrates the committees who are working on the project. The Regional Mental Health Steering Committee sets strategic direction and guides the project. The Mental Health Advisory Board provides direct input to the workgroup and steering committee. The Workgroup assesses the current patient flow, referral and triage processes. The St. Louis Regional Health Commission reviews and approves the final recommendations.



The St. Louis Regional Health Commission (RHC) is facilitating the community-wide planning process. The RHC is a collaborative partnership of health service providers, government and community leaders, community organizations and consumers. Since its formation in 2001, the RHC has served as a lead body for regional planning and implementation of initiatives to strengthen the health care safety net system, and to improve health literacy, prevention and wellness services.

What is the project timeline?

The planning partners worked from April – December 2006 to develop the strategic plan. Future phases of the project will involve implementing the recommendations from phase one, and specifically addressing the needs of the children’s behavioral health system.

What recommendations will result from the project?

Recommendations for system transformation fall into the following categories:

- ∞ Coordinate and Plan on a Regional Level,
- ∞ Integrate Behavioral Health and Physical Health Systems,
- ∞ Enhance and Streamline Funding,
- ∞ Increase Capacity for Behavioral Health Services,
- ∞ Improve Service Delivery,
- ∞ Improve Crisis Services,
- ∞ Reduce Access Barriers,
- ∞ Redesign Assessment and Screening Process, and
- ∞ Develop a Master Patient Index.

What lessons have you learned from the project?

We have learned several lessons as a result of this work that may be helpful for other regions considering similar efforts:

- ∞ *Keep the client at the center of all efforts* – Keeping the focus on the client is the first priority. Clients must be engaged in two ways: 1) to provide input in the changes being discussed and 2) any changes being discussed must be centered on the success of the client.
- ∞ *Involve a broad group of organizations* – To be successful, a broad spectrum of organizations and individuals must be involved, including local and state governments, large and small providers, advocacy organizations, etc. Additionally, the stakeholders must move beyond “involvement” to real decision-making authority of the project and the recommendations.
- ∞ *Clarify the project vision early and often* – Stakeholders need to narrow and clarify a vision for the work early in the project so that the project remains focused. The vision should be reviewed and clarified throughout the project because 1) new people will be engaged as the work progresses, and 2) the vision may change slightly as more information is gathered.
- ∞ *Engage executive sponsors for the project* – To ensure success, a diverse group of individuals should be identified who can champion the project to external audiences, provide input about the project direction and encourage stakeholders to keep moving toward the goal. The executive sponsors are not usually involved in the daily management of the project, but they should be regularly updated about the project status. To identify executive sponsors, consider “Whose support do we need to implement any recommendations resulting from this project?”
- ∞ *Assess before you recommend* – Stakeholders should ensure they have collected and reviewed data about the issue before moving to recommendations. Time spent on data

collection ensures decisions are made on facts – not just gut feelings, helps build trust and rapport among group members, and provides a solid, fact-based case for change before beginning the hard work of agreeing on recommendations.

- ∞ *Continue to assess external environment for factors that impact project outcomes* – It is important to be proactive in staying aware of and navigating through changes in the external environment that can impact project outcomes. For example, the new Missouri Transformation Initiative, a state-wide effort to transform the behavioral health system, and current Medicaid reform efforts have influence on both the creation and implementation of recommendations.

What is included in this document?

As noted above, this document includes:

- ∞ Vision – summary of stakeholder interviews to identify challenges and opportunities in the behavioral health safety net system.
- ∞ Current State Assessment – summary of the Eastern Region behavioral health system, including: how individuals access and utilize the behavioral health system, how the behavioral health system is financed, and barriers to accessing and utilizing the behavioral health system.
- ∞ Alternative Models Analysis – summary of best practices and alternative models for behavioral health service delivery from across the country.
- ∞ Recommendations – detailed recommendations, developed by all stakeholders involved in this project, for improving access to and delivery of services in the safety net behavioral health system.

How do I get involved or who do I contact for more information?

The Mental Health Advisory Board provides input to the steering committee and workgroups and is open to all who would like to be engaged in the planning process. To be involved in the Advisory Board, contact Bethany Johnson (see below).

For more information, contact Bethany Johnson, Project Director, at bjohnson@stlrhc.org or 314.446.6454, extension 1011.

**Eastern Region Public Mental Health Planning Project
Steering Committee Membership**

Ms. Francie Broderick

Executive Director

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Mr. John Eiler

Executive Vice President, Behavioral Health
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SSM Healthcare St. Louis

Dr. Dolores Gunn

Director of Health

St. Louis County

Ms. Mary Ann Hampton

Chief Nursing Officer

Forest Park Hospital

Mr. Jim House

Executive Director

*Mental Health Association of Greater St.
Louis*

Dr. Steve Huss

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COMTREA, Inc.

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CEO, Eastern MO Hospital Psychiatric
System

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Missouri Department of Mental Health

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Executive Director

NAMI St. Louis

Dr. Amanda Murphy

President/CEO

Hopewell Center

Ms. Connie Neumann

Executive Director

Queen of Peace Center

Mr. Mark Stansberry

Executive Director

BJC Behavioral Health

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Vice President of Services

Hopewell Center

Dr. Karl Wilson, Committee Chair

President/CEO

Crider Center for Mental Health

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Community Mental Health Manager

Missouri Department of Mental Health

**Eastern Region Public Mental Health Planning Project
Workgroup Membership**

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Missouri Department of Corrections

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Gracehill Neighborhood Health

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Ms. Regina Trotter

Vice President of Services
Hopewell Center

**Eastern Region Public Mental Health Planning Project
Mental Health Advisory Board Membership**

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Queen of Peace Center

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Community Liaison
U.S. Senator Talent

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St. Louis County Dept. of Health

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Olin Fellow
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St. Louis Regional Center
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*Missouri Department of Mental Health,
Mental Retardation and Developmental
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St. Louis Mental Health Board

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Area Director
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