

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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National Core Indicators Project

The Division of Developmental Services has been selected as one of seven states to participate in a national "Core Indicators Project" being conducted by the Center on Managed Long Term Supports. The central aim of this project is to develop a nationally-recognized set of measures that will enable state developmental disabilities authorities to gauge the performance of their service delivery systems along a variety of outcome dimensions. During this project, potential performance indicators will be evaluated and field tested. In addition, alternative methods of collecting performance data on an ongoing basis will be explored.

State developmental disabilities service systems face complex challenges. Due to various social, economic and demographic factors, the number of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families seeking community services and supports is growing nationwide. In many states, there are extensive waiting lists for services. At the same time, state policymakers are demanding that system managers pursue cost containment strategies (sometimes framed as managed care initiatives) that demand tighter management of service system dollars in order to yield maximum results.

This policy climate demands that solid, reliable data are collected in order to gauge how well a state's service system is performing and implement effective strategies to continuously improve system performance. It is the intent of the project to develop outcome and performance measure that will:

Compare performance and outcomes across providers of similar services;

Relate such results to the costs incurred by these providers;

Measure the results being achieved against the costs of various alternative community support strategies;

Take into account real differences among individuals when gauging performance and outcomes; and,

Examine how the service system is performing against results obtained in other states.

Such performance and outcome data is vital if the state, as principal payer, is to determine whether the cost savings derived from managed care are legitimate (i.e., are they a result of improved efficiency and effectiveness) or stem from a degradation in the quality of community services and supports. The Core Indicators Project fits with current activities at DDMHS to redesign the management information system to effectively track and evaluate performance by service providers on key service outcomes and indicators of success.

Over the next twelve months, the project will:

Develop, test and advance a nationally-recognized, multi-faceted set of indicators that payers, policymakers, service system administrators and providers in any state can use in gauging and improving service delivery system performance. These indicators will be keyed to critical system outcome and performance dimensions;

Establish corresponding norms and standards as a basis for the interpretation of the indicator set;

Develop an abbreviated consumer survey tool and protocol that will permit the economical collection of the data needed to assess performance through the eyes of individuals who receive publicly-funded services and supports; and,

Identify practical solutions for collecting, tracking and reporting other performance indicators on an economical basis.

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