

Massachusetts Community First Systems Transformation Grant Update #1, March 2007

Welcome to Community First Systems Transformation Grant Update #1!

This is a new way we will be sharing information with you about Community First Systems Transformation Grant activities. Starting this month, we will be sending monthly highlights of general grant and subcommittee activities. We hope you find these updates helpful. If you have questions or want to learn more about specific items in this update, please feel free to contact Mason or one of the project leads (contact information is listed below).

General Administrative Updates:

As you may know, we have moved to change the previously existing structure of grant administration that included a Steering Committee. The proposed change to replace the Steering Committee structure with a new coordinating body for the grant was processed with all committees, individual members, and the Grant's Executive Leadership. Each subcommittee has now selected three representatives to sit on the new coordinating body called the cross-committee group. This group will take up any "hot" or potentially controversial topics that arise over the life of the grant and will be another forum for meaningful dialog among grant partners. We are excited to get this group convened.

All three subcommittees have just completed their first round of quarterly full subcommittee meetings. The next full subcommittee meetings will be taking place in late April and May. To keep the work moving in-between quarterly meetings, each subcommittee has broken into smaller "workgroups" to focus on specific action steps. The updates shared below will be presented by workgroup and will provide just a sample of what each group is accomplishing.

Subcommittee Updates:

Diversion Subcommittee

The Diversion Subcommittee has split into three workgroups to focus on (1) identifying alternative financing mechanisms for long-term supports in the community; (2) targeting individuals for diversion from or transition out of a facility-based care setting; and (3) implementing effective consumer outreach strategies (this workgroup will convene this spring).

The Financing Workgroup has been actively exploring a number of financing tools which may be helpful in expanding access to long-term support services in the community. These tools can be considered as strategies for accomplishing the goals of the Community First policy—which aims to allow people to choose the community first. Current activities in this workgroup include:

- Looking into how other States have implemented "Fast Track Medicaid Eligibility" and "Presumptive Eligibility" programs and what can be learned from these experiences.
- Exploring the details of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) State Plan Amendment option under the 2005 Federal Deficit Reduction Act (DRA), which allows States to offer a limited number of community-based support services without a formal Medicaid 1915(c) HCBS Waiver.

- Connecting with stakeholders from the Mental Health Transformation Grant and exploring their specific recommendations regarding a service for individuals with mental illness called Peer Specialist Services.

The Targeting Workgroup has been focusing on how to improve the services available to people in the community and for transitions, and on developing specific profiles of populations that could be better served in the community. This workgroup is focusing on:

- Gathering information from a questionnaire distributed to all committee members and diverse organizations across the state, which work with and/or advocate on behalf of elders and individuals with disabilities in both the community and facility-based settings.
- Developing a comprehensive list of existing reports and data sources that will supplement the information gathered from the questionnaire.

Housing Subcommittee

The Housing Subcommittee's work is focused on facilitating access to affordable and accessible housing for elders and individuals with disabilities. To accomplish this goal the housing subcommittee has broken into three workgroups focused on (1) stakeholder collaboration, (2) capacity building and access to information, and (3) resource utilization.

The Stakeholder Collaboration Workgroup aims to improve coordination, communication, and administration among housing stakeholders. Activities of this group include:

- Making a formal recommendation to convene a group of State housing staff from agencies that serve elders and adults with disabilities to re-establish a formal and on-going cross-agency collaborative working group.
- Drafting a letter of support from the subcommittee on several proposed changes to the Architectural Access Board regulations.

The Capacity Building and Information Workgroup is initially focusing on:

- Compiling existing assessment and/or application tools for housing and housing with supports programs. The workgroup will examine existing housing questions and will work on recommending best practices for assessment modules to assist providers when working with individuals who have housing needs and questions.
- Gathering information on existing training models for staff on housing information and assess if/how these training programs could be useful for organizations serving elders and individuals with disabilities.

The Resource Utilization Workgroup is focusing on:

- Summarizing various reports on housing with supports and models for further exploration.
- Sharing information we know about home modification funding sources and considering the best way to assist with marketing these resources.
- Exploring the capacity for supporting a listserv of housing provider/stakeholders for information sharing.

Quality Subcommittee

The Quality Subcommittee has similarly split into three workgroups to focus on key components integral in supporting recommendations for the creation of a comprehensive quality management strategy for the community-based long-term supports system. These three components are (1) consumer involvement, (2) data, and (3) reports.

The Consumer Involvement Workgroup is charged with developing a cross-cutting plan on how to meaningfully involve consumers at each step of the process of implementing a quality management system. To date the workgroup has:

- Developed a detailed outline for the consumer involvement plan.
- Begun to identify ways to reach community members for feedback on important aspects of quality.

The Data Workgroup is focused on understanding what quality data is currently being collected and utilized across the system of community based long-term supports, exploring the possibility for the development of core outcomes and indicators across departments, and common approaches to gathering, storing and utilizing quality data. To this end, the data workgroup is:

- Developing and will be completing an environmental scan/ inventory of current quality management efforts across key state agencies.
- Drafting a plan on gathering appropriate information on best practices in quality initiatives from private-pay and Medicare programs.

The Report Workgroup is focused on examining and recommending best practices for sharing quality information to diverse stakeholder groups. The workgroup is:

- Contacting organizations identified as using promising practices in involving consumers in quality management.
- Gathering and summarizing existing quality reports that are published within the Commonwealth and are disseminated publicly to diverse stakeholder groups.

Questions or Comments?

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