

Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant

Workgroup 6: Technology is Used to Access
Mental Health Care and Information

March 8, 2006

On April 29, 2002

- The President identified three obstacles preventing Americans with mental illnesses from getting the excellent care they deserve:
 - Stigma that surrounds mental illnesses,
 - Unfair treatment limitations and financial requirements placed on mental health benefits in private health insurance, and
 - The fragmented mental health service delivery system.

Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America

July 2003

The Mental Health Delivery System

- is fragmented and in disarray ... leading to unnecessary and costly disability, homelessness, school failure and incarceration. The report described the extent of unmet needs and barriers to care, including:
 - Fragmentation and gaps in care for children,
 - Fragmentation and gaps in care for adults with serious mental illnesses,
 - High unemployment and disability for people with serious mental illnesses,
 - Lack of care for older adults with mental illnesses, and
 - Lack of national priority for mental health and suicide prevention.

The Goal of a Transformed System is **Recovery**

- The *Interim Report* concluded that the system is not oriented to the single most important goal of the people it serves - the hope of recovery
- This partnership of personalized care means basically choosing *who*, *what*, and *how* appropriate health care will be provided:
 - Choosing which mental health care professionals are on the team,
 - Sharing in decision making, and
 - Having the option to agree or disagree with the treatment plan.

Recovery

- *Recovery* refers to the process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities. For some individuals, recovery is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life despite a disability. For others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms. Science has shown that having hope plays an integral role in an individual's recovery.

Resilience

- *Resilience* means the personal and community qualities that enable us to rebound from adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or other stresses - and to go on with life with a sense of mastery, competence, and hope. We now understand from research that resilience is fostered by a positive childhood and includes positive individual traits, such as optimism, good problem-solving skills, and treatments. Closely-knit communities and neighborhoods are also resilient, providing supports for their members.

Commission identified six goals

- **Goal 1: Americans Understand that Mental Health Is Essential to Overall Health.**
- **Goal 2: Mental Health Care Is Consumer and Family Driven.**
- **Goal 3: Disparities in Mental Health Services Are Eliminated.**
- **Goal 4: Early Mental Health Screening, Assessment, and Referral to Services Are Common Practice.**
- **Goal 5: Excellent Mental Health Care Is Delivered and Research Is Accelerated.**
- **Goal 6: Technology Is Used to Access Mental Health Care and Information.**

Goal 6

Technology Is Used to Access Mental Health Care and Information

- In a transformed mental health system:
 - Advanced communication and information technology will empower consumers and families and will be a tool for providers to deliver the best care.
 - Consumers and families will be able to regularly communicate with the agencies and personnel that deliver treatment and support services and that are accountable for achieving the goals outlined in the individual plan of care.
 - Information about illnesses, effective treatments, and the services in their community will be readily available to consumers and families.

- Access to information will foster continuous, caring relationships between consumers and providers by providing a medical history, allowing for self-management of care, and electronically linking multiple service systems.
- Providers will access expert systems that bring to bear the most recent breakthroughs and studies of optimal outcomes to facilitate the best care options.
- Informed consumers and providers will result in better outcomes and will more efficiently use resources.

- **Electronic health records** can improve quality by promoting adoption and adherence to evidence-based practices through inclusion of clinical reminders, clinical practice guidelines, tools for clinical decision support, computer order entry, and patient safety alert systems. For example, prescription medications being taken or specific drug allergies would be known, which could prevent serious injury or death resulting from drug interactions, excessive dosages or allergic reactions.

- Access to care will be improved in many underserved rural and urban communities by using health technology, telemedicine care, and consultations.
- The privacy of personal health information - especially in the case of mental illnesses - will be strongly protected and controlled by consumers and families. With appropriate privacy protection, electronic records will enable essential medical and mental health information to be shared across the public and private sectors.

- Reimbursements will become flexible enough to allow implementing evidence-based practices and coordinating both traditional clinical care and e-health visits. In both the public and private sectors, policies will change to support these innovative approaches.

To aid in transforming the mental health system, the Commission makes two recommendations:

- **6.1 Use health technology and telehealth to improve access and coordination of mental health care, especially for Americans in remote areas or in underserved populations.**
- **6.2 Develop and implement integrated electronic health record and personal health information systems.**

Mental Health Transformation in Connecticut

Under the Leadership of Governor M. Jodi Rell

- 14 state agencies and the judicial branch are coming together to develop a state plan to address transformation of the mental health system
- CT envisions a recovery-oriented system of mental health care that will offer all the State's citizens, across the lifespan, an array of accessible services and recovery supports from which they will be able to choose ...

Process for the Workgroup

- Develop recommendations with identified priorities for the operationalization of Goal 6, referring to the use of technology to meet the needs of our stakeholders (consumers, family members, advocates, communities, providers, local, state, and federal partners, and others).
- Recommendations will be communicated to the Steering Committee for review and incorporating into the proposed state plan.
- Federal partners will review and approve the plan.

Transforming Mental Health Care in America

The Federal Action Agenda: First
Steps, 2005