



Addictions and Mental Health Division Transformation Initiative Adult Mental Health Initiative (AMHI)

May 2010 – Communication 1

The Addictions and Mental Health (AMH) division together with consumers, Oregon's Mental Health Organizations (MHO), Community Mental Health Programs, providers and others have embarked on an ambitious initiative that will change the way adult mental health services are delivered in Oregon. The Adult Mental Health Initiative known as AMHI ("Aim-High") is designed to ensure that the right types of services are delivered at the right time to adults with mental illness.

Currently, too many Oregonians living with mental illness spend too much time in the wrong level of care and cannot access services that could help them become even more independent. Part of the challenge is community-based long-term care services are separate and uncoordinated from the majority of community-based services and supports for Oregonians with serious mental illness. Therefore there are limited incentives to assist individuals in moving to the least restrictive setting possible.

A key strategy for this project is to transfer responsibility for managing residential services to the MHOs. The goal in partnering with MHOs is to improve coordination and community responsibility for adult mental health services at all levels of care in the system. It is also designed to increase the availability and quality of individualized community-based services and supports so adults with mental illness are served in the least restrictive environment appropriate for their needs.

The MHOs are willing to take on the management of the extended and long-term care system. AMH asked the MHOs to volunteer to become "early-adopters" and to help AMH design this new system. As of this communication, eight of the nine MHOs have volunteered to participate in the AMHI initiative. The ninth may join the project shortly. If all nine MHOs join, we will be able to make these changes statewide versus having two distinct systems running simultaneously.



The work to design the financing, contracting and delivery of service components has already begun but much more work needs to be done. AMH has developed a multi-tiered and multi-phased planning process. A DHS work team, with members across multiple units, is working on the details that will be necessary to make this system change a reality. A planning committee with representatives from all sectors of the system is helping identify and resolve many of the issues that we know will occur.

Currently, AMH is planning for three distinct phases over two and a half biennia. Phase I will be operational by September 1, 2010 with new contracts with the MHOs. Initially, AMH will be providing funding to help MHOs become more engaged in helping individuals transition from the state hospitals and between different levels of care. Additionally, AMH will be providing additional funding for increased utilization of outpatient services.

The initiative is sponsored by Richard Harris, Assistant Director for Addictions and Mental Health (AMH). Implementation will be led by Jane-ellen Weidanz and Ralph Summers.

Future communications will outline the timeline of the project, the phases and critical issues being addressed. The next communication will be in late May. AMH is developing a website for this initiative. Please check the main mental health website, AMH System Information, for the link. The main mental health site can be accessed at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/mentalhealth/index.shtml>.

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