

## MEMORANDUM

TO: DMHAS-grant or General Assistance funded non-profit service agencies  
DMHAS State Operated Facilities

FROM: Thomas A. Kirk, Jr., Ph.D.   
Commissioner

DATE: August 11, 2006

SUBJECT: DMHAS SFY 2006 Consumer Survey

I would like to inform you that DMHAS Officer of the Commissioner has completed analyzing the data for the SFY 2006 DMHAS Consumer Survey. In addition to the booklet format, this report is also available on our website <http://www.dmhas.state.ct.us/QMI/consumersurvey.htm>.

### **Large Respondent Pool and Thank You**

Over 22,000 persons with psychiatric and/or substance use disorders, receiving services during the time of the survey, took the time to respond to it this year. Please thank them on our behalf for their effort. Also, kindly accept my thanks to you for your assistance with the survey process, as you greatly helped assure the data quality and integrity.

### **One Important Dimension**

This report gives you an opportunity to examine service delivery and quality through the perspective of the consumer/person in recovery. It is only one, yet a very important dimension to review when considering how the “customer” sees a program. Interestingly, while an agency may have set a mission, goals and objectives for one or more of its programs from a certain framework, it may be that its consumers/persons in recovery do not look at it that way. How do we, or should we, handle this? It is one of those questions that sometimes arise when discussing “person centered care.”

### **Tool for Improvement**

I suggest that you review the findings carefully and that they will be helpful as one element of future planning and oversight of your agency. I would also urge you to carefully review the recently released DMHAS publication “**Practice Guidelines for Recovery-Oriented Health Care.**” It includes strategies for some of the same areas that are addressed in the Consumer Survey, e.g. participation of people in their care, promoting access, strengths-based assessment, recovery goals. Released and distributed at our recent Recovery Conference at the Hartford Convention Center, it can be downloaded off the DMHAS website at [www.dmhas.state.ct.us](http://www.dmhas.state.ct.us).

### **Recovery-oriented Healthcare – Choice, Getting “better”**

Always keeping in mind that our goal is to create a fully recovery-oriented healthcare service system, we need to consider that the person who takes responsibility for their recovery is required to make a series of choices about his or her care. They should hope to get better, not necessarily cured. Several questions, e.g. 17 – 23 begin with “I do better...,” “I am better able...” Fair

questions? I think so. The consumer's choices will likely be made while considering many important factors, such as the range of clinical and recovery-support services offered, and how person-centered and user-friendly the agency is. This report is one tool that our consumers and families can use to make such decisions about care.

### **Individual Agency Reports**

This year we are very pleased to send your individual agency reports, in addition to the statewide survey report. Please remember that you can also print program level reports and trends as this was an enhancement that we added into DPAS last year. Please distribute this memo to people who are responsible for the implementation of the consumer survey project in your agency. We appreciate your assistance with disseminating this information.

### **A Few Additional Comments**

No survey instrument is perfect in its comprehensiveness, clarity, or in other significant dimensions. I appreciate all of the comments and suggestions that you made (see pp 72-78). Many of you found the content and process smoother and better than previous years. You noted the helpful approach of QMI staff with whom you interacted in the process. You offered suggestions that would improve the questions, the relationship of these to specific levels of care, or the collection of data. Be assured that these will be factored into future surveys as best we can.

### **DMHAS Contact Staff**

Finally, if you have any questions or additional suggestions that may help to improve the content, collection process or analysis of the survey results, please contact Minakshi Tikoo, Ph.D., Director of Quality Management and Improvement at [minakshi.tikoo@po.state.ct.us](mailto:minakshi.tikoo@po.state.ct.us) or 860-418-6824 or Eileen Fenton-Gondek at [Eileen.FentonGondek@po.state.ct.us](mailto:Eileen.FentonGondek@po.state.ct.us) or 860-418-6809.