

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: September 4, 2007

SUBJECT: DMHAS SFY 2007 Consumer Survey

We have completed analyzing the data for the SFY 2007 DMHAS Consumer Survey. In addition to the booklet format, this report is also available on our website <http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/LIB/dmhas/CSreport07.pdf>

A Big Thank You

Over 24,000 persons with psychiatric and/or substance use disorders, receiving services during the time of the survey, took the time to respond to the survey. This is a slight increase from last year. Please thank them on our behalf for their effort.

One Very Important Dimension

This report gives us an opportunity to hear about the quality of our service delivery through the perspective of the consumer/person in recovery. It is a very important dimension to review when considering how the “customer” sees a program. The most recent addition to the Institute of Medicine “Quality Chasm” series discusses the importance of consumer satisfaction as one of the measures for evaluating quality of care. This is one that Connecticut has been doing well.

New this Year- Consumer Voice

Many people had over the last few years recommended changes to the survey. Listening to these suggestions, we improved our technical presentation of the survey. We added a few questions about length of stay, reason for being in services, and how the survey was administered. Lastly, we added an open-ended comment box for people to tell us anything that they wanted to share with DMHAS. Consequently, this year’s report has richer content due to the incorporation of consumer voices.

Individual Agency Reports

This year we are again 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 using the DPAS Consumer Survey Application. We appreciate your assistance with distributing this memo to the people who implemented the consumer survey in your agency.

Tool for Improvement

I suggest that you review the findings carefully. 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, and recovery goals. Released and distributed at our recent Recovery Conference at the Hartford Convention Center, it can be downloaded off the DMHAS website at <http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/lib/dmhas/publications/practiceguidelines.pdf>.

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 assumes responsibility for their recovery is required to make a series of choices about his or her care. They should hope to get better, but 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.

A Few Additional Comments

No survey instrument is perfect in its comprehensiveness, clarity, or in other significant dimensions. This year was the first year that we asked people to share their thoughts with us, and they did. We appreciate your honesty. We realize that there are areas that we can improve upon as we work to become a person-centered recovery-oriented system of care. We will do our best to improve our services and our delivery methods.

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 Evaluation, Quality Management and Improvement at minakshi.tikoo@po.state.ct.us or 860-418-6824.