

Examples of Family/Professional Partnership County Profiles

County A

Description:

This county has three components which serve advisory and policy development functions as well as provide outreach and supportive services to families:

- Family Resource Advisory Team – volunteers appointed by and reporting to the Mental Health Board
- Parent Advisory Committee – family members who are employees and/or representatives of agencies who contract with the county
- Family Coordinator/Parent Outreach – family members who provide outreach and supportive services to children and their families

Budget:

Approximately \$160,000. Funds come from state CSOC grant. Approximately 2/3 of the Parent Outreach Worker hours are billed to Medi-Cal under rehabilitation services.

Staffing and Functions:

Family Resource Advisory Team – Membership on this Board-appointed committee consists of twenty-three members, 17 of whom are family members of children with serious emotional disabilities, and 6 of whom are youth who are current or past consumers of county mental health services. (Voting is weighted so that the youth have 50% of the decision-making power.) The team provides technical assistance regarding the “parent perspective,” develops support and education services for families, promotes family professional partnerships, provides family expertise in policy and program development (e.g., sitting on hiring and RFP panels, and Mental Health Task Force Committees), promotes strength-based/culturally competent/family-focused services, identifies service gaps and makes recommendations, reviews performance outcomes and promotes public education regarding mental health services for children and families. This team meets once a month for two and one-half hours.

Parent Advisory Committee – This group is comprised of nine family members of children with serious emotional disabilities. They are either employees of the county or representatives of agencies who have contracts with the county. Parent Advisor positions within contracting agencies are mandated by the county. The PAC provides technical assistance regarding the “parent perspective,” provides a supportive environment for the Parent Advisors, promotes family professional partnerships, ensures continuity with the Parent Advisor job duties within the community-based organizational structure, develops and implements special events in the community, increases family empowerment and self-help, and fosters involvement of family members in community boards, committees, task forces, etc. This committee meets monthly.

Family Coordinator/Parent Outreach – The Family Coordinator and a supporting clerical position are full-time employees of a county contract agency. The Family Coordinator is a member of the CSOC Executive Team, and reports to the County Mental Health Director. This position chairs the Family Resource Advisory Team and the Parent Advisory Committee and supervises the staff and volunteers of the Parent Outreach Program.

Three Parent Outreach workers are directly contracted with the county. These workers offer referral and support services to families, accompany the families to IEP meetings, facilitate parent support groups and provide in-home support services. Volunteers screen calls and make referrals. Support groups for young adults receiving services are facilitated by other young adults. Transportation and meals are provided to enable families to participate.

Referral Criteria/Process:

Family members and youth can self-refer to most outreach services. All families receiving services that are Medi-Cal eligible are referred by the County Access Team.

County B**Description:**

This county has two separate efforts that collaborate in providing advisory, planning, advocacy and service functions within the county:

- Parent Network (PN) – a family member organization joined with a private non-profit agency that contracts with the county to operate the organization.
- Family Partnership Services (FPS) – a program within the county mental health department, staffed largely by family members of children with serious emotional illness.

Budget:

The Parent Network budget, including the provision of respite services, is roughly \$198,000 for PN and \$21,500 for PN Respite Services. The sources of funds are federal and state SOC allocations.

The Family Partnership Services budget is \$100,000, with an additional \$50,000 available for the purchase of flexible, or “Wrap-Around” resources for families. The sources of funds are federal and state SOC allocations.

Staffing and Functions:

Parent Network (PN) – The network is staffed by three .75FTE positions, all of which are employees of a contract agency. The Parent Network Coordinator, a parent of a child with serious emotional disturbance, oversees the operation of the network and supervises the Respite Coordinator and a clerical staff person. This position reports to the agency Director of Residential and Treatment Services and sits on the weekly County Children’s Managers Bureau Meeting.

The PN Coordinator, and/or other family member representatives, sit on a variety of planning, management and advisory committees within the county and the contracting agency. These include the County Quality Leadership Committee, county hiring panels, the County Contractor’s Meeting, Managed Care Planning and the contractor’s Administrative Team meetings. The Coordinator does outreach to family members in the community, offering information, referral and advocacy. This position works to develop a constituency that can advocate on a system level as well.

The Parent Network operates the Respite Program. The Respite Coordinator trains and certifies respite workers, accepts referrals from a county liaison, works with the family to develop a respite plan, and schedules respite services. Respite workers are temporary part-time employees of the contract agency.

The Parent Network runs the “Finding Your Way Program” which is a weekly group of meetings that include a parent support group facilitated by a professional and the PN Coordinator, a therapeutic group for siblings of children with serious emotional disabilities that is facilitated by a child therapist, and an activity group for children with serious emotional problems that is facilitated by the Parent Network Respite Coordinator. The PN has also operated a summer day camp for children with serious emotional disorders.

Family Partnership Services (FPS) – This is a part of the County Health and Social Services Department. All employees are county employees. The program is supervised by a program coordinator who has responsibility for oversight of a number of contracted community-based services. Two .75FTE Parent Aides, who are family members of children with serious emotional disturbances provide person-to-person support to families and children, assist families in accessing services, assist families in filling out forms, facilitate parents acting as resources for each other, educate parents to be informed consumers, participate as parent advocates in mental health teams, work with staff to provide support to families, and attend staff meetings as parent representatives.

PN and FPS staff meet twice monthly to coordinate services, and approve requests for “Wrap-Around” funds.

Referral Criteria/Process

Referrals to the PN are open. Referrals to the PN Respite program are made by the FPS and participants must be clients served by county mental health.

Referrals to FPS are generated through a variety of county mental health units, including the outpatient clinics, day treatment programs and placement unit, and must be current clients of Children’s Mental Health.

County C

Description:

The county initially relied solely upon the participation of a volunteer group of parents, the Parent Advisory Group (PAG). At the present time, the county has developed a plan to create paid positions within the CSOC, including a Family Coordinator.

Budget:

There is currently no identified budget. State CSOC funds are used to finance some travel costs of family member advisors. Funding is needed for the Family Coordinator. Some of this will come from this position's provision of EPSDT billable services. Remaining funds have yet to be identified.

Staffing and Functions:

Parent Advisory Group - This group is an eight-member volunteer group of parents of children who are currently receiving, or have received, services through the system of care. The group meets every other month or more frequently if needed. The Behavioral Health Children's Coordinator and other professionals attend as invited. The group develops input regarding all aspects of children's services, including service development and the identification of barriers and problems within the system. Individual families are encouraged to attend and share issues of concern with the PAG. The group offers input to and receives information and input from, the Behavioral Health Children's Coordinator. Parents from this group also sit on the County Mental Health Commission and hiring panels for county children's services positions. One parent also attends the Greater Bay Area Children's Coordinators Meeting.

Family Coordinator - This position will be a county position that will provide a parent representative at relevant meetings and committees, such as the CSOC Program Supervisor and Quality Improvement meetings. The person in this position will also provide individualized support services to families.

Location:

The county is considering whether to create one full-time position or to hire two individuals half-time. The part-time positions would make it easier for the county to provide services in two different geographical areas of the county.

Referral Criteria/Process:

Referrals to the Family Coordinator will initially be channeled through CSOC staff. After the service is established it is hoped that families will also be able to self-refer.