

## ABSTRACT

The Pennsylvania System of Care Planning Expansion involves a comprehensive planning process that will determine how to establish systems of care in all areas of the Commonwealth. The effort will build on our current SAMHSA System of Care Cooperative Agreement and expand our focus from the current 15 counties to all 67 counties in Pennsylvania. We will involve state and county child serving system leaders, in equal partnership with youth and family representatives, to incorporate the unique strengths and challenges from all areas of the state. Regional Planning Groups will be established to work on system of care planning for their region. Their work will be informed by smaller work groups of counties that will meet with Regional Planning Facilitators on identification of county-specific issues within the Region. There will be two other concurrent Planning Groups, one to identify how to establish or strengthen youth leadership and support and one to identify how to establish or strengthen family leadership and support throughout the Commonwealth.

The goal and the main outcome of the planning process is the development of a state plan that will identify the systems changes (regulation, funding, policy, structures) that need to occur to have the child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral, health, and education systems operate as one integrated whole for youth that have complex mental health needs, multi-system involvement, and their families. The SAMHSA Planning Grant will provide the resources to bring policy and financing experts to work with the state and local teams. It will also support the planning facilitators in working intensively with regional teams and with the youth and family teams.

Our Expansion Planning process will take on the main challenges in developing systems of care throughout the state: gaining support for large scale organizational change, having genuine partnerships with youth and families, and assuring adequate financial support in times of economic challenge. We will develop consensus among the child serving systems in all of our counties about how to best integrate roles and responsibilities at the local and state level. This work entails changing the culture of current systems, from one of simple collaboration to one of true partnership designed to increase their capacity for attaining a sustainable transformation. We will work within a strength-based perspective to capitalize and value the unique natural supports and community resources in Pennsylvania counties, particularly those of the faith community and those of cultural relevance to specific underserved groups, as essential parts of each youth and family's individualized plan of care. We will carefully examine current child system expenditures and identify various financing options for system of care development. Our planning process will ensure the ongoing availability of quality services, as well as financing of start-up, innovation, infrastructure development, evaluation, and other implementation activities. This will ensure continuity in attending the needs of the children and their families, as we work to build local and state capacity for long term systems transformation in Pennsylvania.