

NOVEMBER 2008

The Issues Examined

Your Statutory Expert in Substance Abuse and Mental Health



Collaborating for Change

State and County Partnership Developed through the Criminal Justice, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Act/Grant

The Reinvestment Act Program, which passed during the 2007 Legislative Session, encourages a collaborative partnership between the State of Florida and local county governments to create innovative approaches to divert individuals with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues from the criminal justice system.

Under this new grant program, 23 Florida counties are receiving more than \$8 million in state funds for vital mental health and substance abuse services, which will be matched dollar for dollar with local funds over the next three years.

The Reinvestment Act and Grant program emphasizes important principles through:

- a state and local partnership requiring each partner to contribute funding to treatment services;
- and the investment of funding in front end treatment and diversion services, which reduces the burden on the criminal justice and effectively utilizes state and local resources.

The program objectives include:

- increasing public safety;
- improving the care and treatment of persons with mental illnesses who are involved in the legal system;
- decreasing the frequency and duration of contact for individuals in our communities with the criminal justice system;
- and increasing cooperation and coordination between the mental health treatment system and the criminal justice system.

The program emphasizes oversight by county governments and the coordination of resources through ongoing planning and assessment of community needs and the identification of resource gaps by the local Public Safety Coordinating Council or another planning entity designated by the county. The involvement of county, governmental and community leaders, state agency representatives and providers will establish a better

coordinated system of care for individuals with mental illnesses and individuals with co-occurring disorders.

As the single purchaser under the grant, the county has the ability to contract with multiple providers to serve the complex needs of the target population. The goal of the grant program is to create numerous "best practices" throughout the state to better serve the target population by enabling them to avoid or minimize incarceration.

"This is especially critical in our current economic crisis where available dollars for addressing the needs of the citizenry of our state with mental illness and/or substance abuse addictions are scarce and rarely available. The development and proliferation of a justice diversion mentality will certainly assist in fueling a redesigned and transformed system of front-end community based care and treatment."

--Judge Mark Speiser, Circuit Court Judge, 17th Judicial Circuit of Florida

State and national experts, as well as state and local officials, met for the first annual meeting of the county grant recipients on July 24-25 in Tampa.

Representatives from the counties shared their experiences in trying to address the substance abuse and mental health issues in their communities and discussed the importance of sustaining the grants locally and expanding the Reinvestment Grant program at the state level. Local governments also received expertise from representatives of the Florida Mental Health Institute Technical Assistance Center, the Council of State Governments and National Association of Counties.

"Over the last few years, I've seen firsthand that Florida's criminal justice system is not equipped and should not be responsible for providing comprehensive treatment for persons with mental illness or substance abuse disorders. Through these grant dollars we put the money where it is needed most, in our communities where better, more consistent services can be provided and at a fraction of the cost."

--General Bob Butterworth at Annual Grantee meeting in Tampa

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Corporation oversees the grant program and has made it a priority to advocate for a system of care that reduces Florida's reliance on judicial, correction and juvenile detention and creates a front end approach to community services.

Through this process, the Corporation has developed a strong partnership with the Florida Association of Counties, Florida Peer Network, Florida Partners in Crisis, State Court Administrator, Agency for Health Care Administration, and the Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Elder Affairs and Department of Children and Families.

Florida Substance Abuse & Mental Health Corporation
1317 Winewood Blvd., Building 1, Suite 206, Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 410-1575 phone • info@samhcorp.org
www.samhcorp.org