

## Improving Data Quality to Improve Data Utility

### Authors/Presenters:

Minakshi Tikoo, Ph.D.  
Director, Quality Management and Improvement  
Dept of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
410 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, Connecticut  
Minakshi.Tikoo@po.state.ct.us

Michael Hettinger  
Systems Developer  
CT Dept of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
410 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, Connecticut  
Michael.Hettinger@po.state.ct.us

The Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services has been systematically collecting client level data since 2000. Most providers submit data as part of the contractual requirement using a state-developed system. In addition, the service contracts also stipulate that certain performance measures will be met as a result of services. Until recently, the Connecticut system did not have a routine and regular review process for the data being submitted, this led to data that was not of good quality, and hence, could not be used for decision-making.

In December of 2005, the division of Quality Management and Improvement (QMI) was reorganized and now reports to the Commissioner. A new strategic QMI plan was developed to communicate with the providers with respect to data quality and performance outcome measures. The first improvement in this series was that starting July 2006 every provider received a report card on "Data Quality." The Data Quality report informs the provider about the quality status of each data element. In addition, documents related with data being collected were organized and shared with the providers via communication from the Commissioner and posted to the web sites. Following these Data Quality reports will be Performance Outcome Measures report developed on the structure of the National Outcome Measures (NOMS) that will be shared with the providers monthly. All these efforts are intended to follow and establish a continuous feed-back loop that keeps everyone involved in the process of data-cleaning, data analysis, and data usability, which CT believes is the key to the use of data being used for decision-making.

This presentation will be useful to peer-states that are currently in the process of developing systems to respond to the National Outcome Measures (NOMS) and other federal requirements. For example, peers will learn:

- ❖ How to establish performance outcome measurement systems that are critical to the day-to-day functioning of programs but can also meet the federal and state requirements?
- ❖ How technology can be used to automate the processing of large volume of data without too many staff?
- ❖ How staff time can be re-directed at actual cleaning of the data by providing technical assistance to providers rather than processing of data?
- ❖ How a true network of care can be assisted by improved access to data for decision-making and planning for services?