

Meeting Summary

Meeting Date and Time: Tuesday, March 16, 2010
3:00-4:00 pm EDT

Participants:

Alabama: Byron White
Illinois: Dorothy Elfring; Mary Smith
Iowa: Jerry Mays
Maryland: Tim Santoni
Minnesota: Joann Rautio
Missouri: Clive Woodward and Virginia S.
Michigan: Su Min Oh
Nebraska: Jim Harvey
New Jersey: Mark Kruszczyński; Steve Fishbein
North Carolina: Gina Price; Maria Fernandez

CMHS: Olinda Gonzalez
NRI: Ted Lutterman; Bernadette Phelan
Others: Debra Kupfer

Meeting Notes:

The NRI received a total of 32 RSVP from states, CMHS, NRI, and other interested parties to join the Workgroup. At the start of the meeting, there were 18 participants in attendance while a few others joined the group while the meeting was in progress (attendance was not taken after the meeting).

NRI staff, Bernadette Phelan, facilitated the workgroup meeting. Bernadette reviewed the charge of the Workgroup, proposed approaches to implement the task, and expected output of the workgroup. These are summarized below:

Goal: The primary goal is to establish a general understanding of the impact of the economic recession on persons with mental illness that will aid states to set more reasonable employment targets in the Community Mental Health Block Grant and that will help CMHS/SAMHSA better understand and potentially adjust national NOMS employment data.

General approach: NRI recommends adopting a multi-dimensional approach in discussing the impact of recession and target setting. NRI suggests a combination of the following approaches:

- 1. Trend data analysis of the state employment rates (general population and SMHA reported employment rate of persons served) covering before and after the economic recession and the State Block Grant employment targets*
- 2. Discussion of state experiences and employment programs to address the impact of the recent economic recession*
- 3. Invite speakers from states or other sectors (researchers, funding institutions like Medicaid, advocacy groups like NAMI, or local/national RSA staff) to discuss any research or employment programs related to the issue on hand*
- 4. Discussion of state target setting methodologies and/or deficits (lack thereof)*
- 5. Invite subject experts on target setting*

Employment NOM Workgroup: Target Setting and Adjusting for Economic Recession

Expected output: The Workgroup will share findings to the larger DIG group on a periodic basis (at the monthly regional call). The culminating activity of the workgroup is a set of guidelines that states may take into consideration when setting targets for employment rates. These guidelines will be tested by a small pilot state participating in the workgroup. The workgroup will work with NRI and CMHS to recommend potential risk adjustments to URS employment data to account for state and national employment trends.

What this WG will not cover: The WG will not delve into the impact of economic recession on mental health service utilization.

Group Discussion:

Dr. Mays of Iowa recommended a review of state definition of employment. He expressed concern on the various employment definition used across states. Dr. Mays likewise recommended to look at the trend on potential loss of peer support jobs.

Mr. Fishbein of New Jersey raised several important points the group needs to consider in target setting:

1. Trends in specific jobs/occupation
2. Number of employment programs (support capacity)
3. Length of time to get a job
4. State implementation of evidence-based practices for employment
5. Number of new jobs
6. Number of replacement

The following state representatives shared their respective state's employment initiatives and/or evaluation projects. These are potential topics for future Workgroup meetings.

1. Nebraska (Jim Harvey): A contract with the University of Nebraska will evaluate the state's supported employment program. There are two components: (a) comparative employment impact of the program between two time periods, 2005-2007 and 2007-2009; and (b) application of the SAMHSA Supported Employment fidelity tool in nine locations. The State expects preliminary findings to be available in August 2010; the project end date is September 2010.
2. Maryland (Tim Santoni): Maryland has robust employment data. They compare employment of persons with mental illness against the general population, track the person's employment status in the past six months, and identify the type of employment (competitive or sheltered).
3. Missouri (Clive Woodward): The state currently has six supported employment pilot sites. These sites are a part of the Johnson and Johnson Charitable Foundation-funded study conducted by Dartmouth University (Dr. Gary Bond). Other states in the study include: MN, MO, NJ, MD, WI, KY, and IL. Participants recommended contacting Dr. Bond about any findings of the study and whether impact of the current economic recession has been considered in their analysis. A concern was raised on teasing out (isolating the impact) of economic recession on employment.
4. Vermont (Ted Lutterman): Dr. Pandiani from Vermont was not able to be on the call. Ted Lutterman of NRI reported on a recent state analysis conducted on employment data of persons served by Vermont's Department of Mental Health. For the two quarters of 2009 considered in the study, employment of community-based service recipients decreased by more than three times the rate of the general population, a 3:1 ratio. Vermont will be invited to present their analysis to the Workgroup.

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Dr. Olinda Gonzalez reported that employment is an important area of concern to CMHS. One of the 10 SAMHSA initiatives is looking at jobs and the economy. No particular details are available yet.

Bernadette briefly mentioned to the group that based on historical employment data reported in the URS, there are still a few states that reported increased rates in 2008 and 2009. The data will be plotted against the general population employment data, defining the period of recession and increased unemployment. The intent is to develop a baseline understanding on factors that may have worked in states posting increased rates in employment as well as factors that may have contributed to the severity in the employment condition in other states.

The meeting was adjourned at 4 pm EST and WG members will be notified of the next meeting via e-mail.