

Date: January 30, 2014

From: Nizhoni Health Systems
5 Middlesex Avenue, Suite 404
Somerville, MA 02145

Re: State Health Resource Plan Survey Questions With Responses

I. How do you anticipate health resource planning for Behavioral Health to help you in your work? How do you expect to use the information resulting from the effort?

Response: As a Medicare-Medicaid certified home health agency specializing in providing a full range of home care services to a client population, the majority of which exhibit diagnoses that include the co-morbidities of mental health disorders and often substance abuse disorders in addition to their medical surgical needs, this focused health resource planning initiative could be extremely advantageous in the area of ensuring those clients who are appropriate and in need of the expertise of our services can be appropriately referred for timely assessment of their needs and initiation of effective home care services.

As a community-based program providing services to individuals in their residences, having a data base of behavioral services we could work collaboratively with would result in optimal and more timely client care with decreased costs due to decreased inpatient stays for these individuals, who are a chronic, at risk client population.

II. Are there specific services within Mental Health & Substance Abuse that you would like to see studied, and were not already included in the list of services on page 6? Please describe with as much specificity as possible. Please indicate how they can be addressed through health resource planning.

Response: It would be extremely informative to study how the provision of outpatient, specifically home care services, affects the number of inpatient stays for this specific group of individuals.

III. Given the importance of prevention and also "post-acute" services for mental health & substance abuse, what critical evidence-based services and programs are available, should be expanded, or need to be developed? Are there specific models you suggest we study?

Response: Identify MAP-certified residential programs and job assistance programs for these individuals with chronic long-term mental illness. Also, more transportation services should be created and made available for this population; often, clients who are seen by the home care nurse could warrant a visit to a clinic, but they lack the resources including transportation, to get there, and the option of being sent out via ambulance to an ER setting is not cost-effective nor a good use of resource services.

IV. Obtaining capacity, workload/volume, and demand data for outpatient & community mental health & substance abuse services is a challenge. Do you have ideas for data sources or suggestions for collecting data now or in the future? Are there specific "data gaps" that you feel are important for future data collection?

Response: Related to our response to question II, a suggestion would be to gather data regarding the number and frequency of inpatient stays for those behavioral health clients who do or do not receive skilled home care services.