

# NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER SURVEY PROJECT

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This summary is based on a larger, more comprehensive report analyzing New Hampshire's Community Mental Health Center Services. To download the full report, visit [www.iod.unh.edu/pmhs.html](http://www.iod.unh.edu/pmhs.html).



INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY / UCED  
A University Center for Excellence on Disability

The Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire was established in 1987 to provide a coherent university-based focus to improve knowledge, policies, and practices related to the lives of persons with disabilities into their schools and communities.

## Questions/Comments:

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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OCTOBER 2009

### NEW STUDY RELEASED ASSESSING CONSUMER PERSPECTIVES OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER SERVICES IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

During Spring of 2009, the Institute on Disability, the UNH Survey Center, the Bureau of Behavioral Health, and New Hampshire's 10 regional Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) again collaborated to learn about consumer perspectives regarding the quality of mental health services received by New Hampshire residents. Adults (ages 18+), youth ages 14-17, and family members of children ages 0-17 receiving services were surveyed, with response rates for each group of 46%, 33% and 40%, respectively. The results from the survey provide a second year of data regarding statewide consumer perspectives on the quality and effectiveness of New Hampshire's community mental health service system.

The full report (available from [www.iod.unh.edu/pmhs.html](http://www.iod.unh.edu/pmhs.html)) documents a range of strengths and challenges concerning mental health services provided through the state's CMHCs. Survey results identified similar strengths to those found in 2008. Areas of concern were also identified, with several new issues arising as a result of new questions posed on the survey.

#### Strengths Identified Include:

- ◆ **Responsive CMHC staff:** Respondents in all three survey groups again praised individual CMHC staff and provided examples of how staff were effective in helping consumers.
- ◆ **Effective Supports:** Many consumers continued to highlight the effectiveness of CMHC supports including: provision of needed services, finding appropriate medications, high quality counselors and psychiatrists, flexibility of services, and ultimately, improved outcomes as a result of services.
- ◆ **Cultural Sensitivity:** Measures for cultural sensitivity among youth were high across all domain areas, with ratings ranging from 89% to 96%.
- ◆ **Improved Outcomes:** Consumers again pointed to decreased police involvement and increased school attendance among youth.

## Areas of Concern for Community Mental Health Centers

The following areas continue to present challenges for effective consumer recovery: staffing support (consistent providers, availability of specialists, age appropriate staff), receiving services or referrals to services for alcohol and drug treatment, and the need to better inform consumers about treatments involving medications (side effects, drug interactions, or time needed to find an effective balance of medications). In 2009, questions around transition planning were expanded in the survey, yielding important new information about consumer needs. Fifty-six percent of families reported they had been involved in planning for their child's transition from middle school to high school. Only 39% of families of youth ages 14-17 stated they were involved in planning for transition between adolescence and adulthood. Of those who were involved in transition planning efforts with their children of any age, 73% agreed that these efforts were helpful. A second area of concern identified involves the need for staffing supports in the home. When adults were asked if they needed support in their current living situation but did not receive it, 12% of adults agreed, as did 21% of families of children receiving services, and 18% of youth. A third area of concern revolves around the need for better coordination of care between CMHC staff and community services. When adults were asked if their mental health provider coordinated services with their primary care provider, 31% said no.

In addition to the challenges identified above, survey questions were again used to help us come to a broader understanding of other challenges to consumer recovery. As with 2008 findings, issues related to social connectedness and community supports was a major concern among adult respondents. In 2009, additional areas of concern were identified, including consumer wellness (38% of adults said their physical health was not good for 15+ of the last 30 days), the need for better access to physical health care (one in twenty adults stated that they did not have a regular primary care provider), and the broader need for better coordination of care across service systems serving New Hampshire families (only 17% of families of children involved in the justice system felt that special steps were taken to incorporate their child's mental health issues).

The full report provides a second year of data on how New Hampshire is doing relative to federal outcome areas. The percent of consumers with positive scores in each area by survey group follows:

- ◆ *Adults:* Quality/Appropriateness (87% agreement), followed by General Satisfaction (80%), Access (79%), Participation in Treatment (72%), Outcomes (62%), Functioning (60%), and Social Connectedness (59%).
- ◆ *Youth Ages 14-17:* Cultural Sensitivity (92% agreement), followed by General Satisfaction (87%), Social Connectedness (85%), Access (82%), Participation in Treatment (75%), Functioning (70%), and other Outcomes (67%).
- ◆ *Family Members of Children 0-17:* Cultural Sensitivity (88% agreement), followed by Participation in Treatment (82%), Access (81%), Social Connectedness (77%), General Satisfaction (73%), Outcomes (54%), and Functioning (53%).

**To learn more, readers are encouraged to read the full report which can be downloaded at [www.iod.unh.edu/pmhs.html](http://www.iod.unh.edu/pmhs.html). The report includes copies of the original surveys, and a breakdown of each survey item.**

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*This work represents a collaborative partnership between the Bureau of Behavioral Health, DHHS, the Institute on Disability and UNH Survey Center, and New Hampshire's Community Mental Health Centers.*

*This document is available in alternative formats upon request.*

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