

Establishing an Action Agenda to Address Children's Mental Health Needs: *Results from the Washington County Children's Mental Health Summit*

On May 25, 2005, 80 key stakeholders gathered together to discuss findings and recommendations from the Washington County CATCH Initiative (aimed at identifying the area children's mental health needs) and vote on Action Steps to improve services. Participant feedback was solicited on 10 potential Action Steps put forth by the Children's Mental Health Advisory Board overseeing this initiative.

Overall, voting results reveal strong support among a wide cross section of community stakeholders for taking action to improve children's mental health services in Washington County. 98% of Summit participants (*Combining results for Strongly Agree and Agree*) agreed that advocacy is needed to fill identified service gaps in the continuum of care for children and families. There is strong consensus supporting several action steps. This provides direction for initial implementation activities. These Action Steps include:

- ◆ Integrating health and mental health services (97%)
- ◆ Addressing reimbursement issues (96%)
- ◆ Developing a comprehensive system of screening, intervention, and evaluation for young children (90%)
- ◆ Developing better crisis intervention services (81%)
- ◆ Developing a web-based resource directory of children's mental health services (69%)

The affiliation of Summit participants is as follows:

- 15% *Advocate/ Advocacy Organization*
- 3% *Child Care*
- 3% *Family Member*
- 17% *Health Provider (MD, Health Center, Hospital)*
- 9% *Insurer*
- 3% *School*
- 31% *Service Provider (Mental Health/ Social Services)*
- 15% *State Dept.*
- 2% *University*
- 2% *Other*

Using a 5-point voting scale, Summit participants ranked each Action Step using this statement: **"This is a priority action step."** Results for each action step are listed below:

Action Step #1:

- **Host a series of facilitated meetings with providers, insurers, and professional organizations to address reimbursement issues**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
45%	51%	4%	0%	0%

Action Step #2:

- **Identify potential partners and explore ways to address the critical need for crisis intervention services for children and families in the county**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
31%	50%	15%	2%	2%

Action Step #3:

- Partner with early care and education providers in developing a comprehensive system of screening, intervention, and evaluation for children presenting with potential developmental/behavior problems

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
41%	49%	10%	0%	0%

Action Step #4:

- Integrate health and mental health services in private pediatric practices/primary care settings

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
70%	27%	3%	0%	0%

Action Step #5:

- Gather information about existing efforts to address behavioral health workforce/training needs and analyze how these efforts affect Washington County

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
22.5%	22.5%	45%	10%	0%

Action Step #6:

- Conduct a survey of the current services and professional resources available in the area that can be used to develop directory/"road-map" as well as to identify gaps in services

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
32%	34%	25%	9%	0%

Action Step #7:

- Use information gleaned from the survey to develop a local web-based resource directory

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
25%	44%	25%	6%	0%

Action Step #8:

- Develop training programs to not only increase knowledge of services available, but also to address skill deficits noted while conducting inventory

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
21%	28%	42%	9%	0%

Action Step #9:

- Research strategies and explore potential partnerships to implement "Systems Navigators"

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
29%	29%	29%	13%	0%

Action Step #10:

- Advocate to fill identified service gaps in the continuum of care for children and families in Washington County

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
76%	22%	2%	0%	0%

Written feedback regarding these action steps was obtained from 35 of the 80 (44%) Summit participants. 32 of the 35 respondents (40% of Summit participants) expressed a willingness to assist and identified concrete ways that either they, or their agencies, could help implement these Action Steps.