

# Newsletter

February, 2006



## Grant Support for Pennsylvania Benchmarking Initiative

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services has awarded a grant in partial support of the benchmarking initiative co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Community Providers Association and Behavioral Pathway Systems. Joan Erney, who heads up the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, supported this grant in recognition of the potential benefits to the providers and consumers of behavioral health services in Pennsylvania. At this point, seventy-six mental health centers, hospitals, and other behavioral health providers in Pennsylvania have signed up as participants.

## AABH Benchmarking Initiative

It is not too late to participate in the AABH Benchmarking initiative featuring performance measures for partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient programs. New subscribers continue to jump in and add to the existing database of approximately 125 programs from around the country. Twenty-two benchmarks are included such as: revenue from funding sources, staff-to-patient ratio, staff productivity, drop out percent, absenteeism, hospitalization rate, re-admission rate, occupancy rate, access, and programming components. The initiative is currently sponsoring a web-based process benchmarking exercise at no cost to subscribers. Through this exercise, data will be gathered to identify potential best practices related to high occupancy levels. A one year subscription to the AABH Benchmarking Initiative costs \$325.

## National Outcome Measures

SAMSHA has been working diligently to establish National Outcome Measures that can serve as a basis for uniform performance measurement and benchmarking. Measures have been selected in the following ten areas: Abstinence from drug/alcohol use, employment/education, crime and criminal justice, stability in housing, access/capacity, retention, social connectedness, perceptions of care, cost effectiveness, and use of evidence-based practices. While much progress has been made, it is still a work in progress. Operational definitions are still being identified in some areas. For further information: <http://www.nationaloutcomemeasures.samhsa.gov/outcome/index.asp>

## Where Does One Begin?

Often, participants in benchmarking initiatives are a bit overwhelmed about the data to be submitted. They may not know where to begin. One good way to overcome inertia is to move forward on two priority areas (1) key performance indicators and (2) "low hanging fruit". Key performance indicators are areas that have strategic or high levels of importance to the organization. Insight in these areas can be critical. "Low hanging fruit" are sources of data that are readily available, typically already just sitting in a report. Submitting "low hanging fruit" helps to overcome data inertia and gets the ball rolling. It also benefits others by building the database. Selecting just a few measures from these two priority areas can help get things started and establish momentum.

## Contact Us!

We want to create an active and vibrant community of individuals and organizations interested in performance management, outcomes, and benchmarking. If you have thoughts, ideas, suggestions, tips, or questions, we'd like to hear from you. Please feel free to contact us at [info@bpsys.org](mailto:info@bpsys.org).