

# Newsletter



October, 2006

## Michigan Benchmarking Initiative

A state-wide benchmarking initiative with the tag line "Moving Beyond the Numbers" has been established by the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards and Behavioral Pathway Systems. Headquartered in Lansing, MACMHB represents the forty-nine community mental health service providers in the state of Michigan. A meeting of the benchmarking workgroup took place October 16 at the MACMHB conference in Traverse City to select the performance indices that will receive focus. The work of the group was guided by a state-wide interest survey that had been conducted. Special attention will be given to operational definitions for the indices chosen. There will be an effort to tie data submission to electronic files already being prepared for the state.

## PCPA Benchmarking Reports

The benchmarking initiative co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Community Providers Association and Behavioral Pathway Systems is well into its first year of implementation. Benchmarking Reports have been generated and the data is being scrutinized by behavioral health leaders. Aggregate data is also being examined and interpreted by PCPA leadership. BPS is working actively with the 77 registered organizations to submit data, interpret reports, and identify potential best practices. A process benchmarking exercise on access was conducted at the annual PCPA conference. A number of methods were identified in this highly energized workshop as potential best practices for bringing about timely access to services.

## Executive Order Impacting Quality Measurement

On August 22, President Bush signed an executive order that directs certain Federal agencies to prioritize efforts to standardize data collection, aggregation and reporting processes. The impact of this decision will be to bring uniformity to the data that health care organizations collect and report. It will also establish a uniform information technology infrastructure that will facilitate automated data collection and reporting. Both of these actions should help reduce duplication of efforts experienced by health care organizations attempting to meet multiple reporting requirements.

## Insights from Process Benchmarking

Process benchmarking continues to produce interesting and often surprising insights into potential best practices. One recent process benchmarking exercise examined access to routine outpatient services. Topping the list of methods that distinguished top performing organizations from others was the practice of refraining from the use of voice mail. While there are many possible interpretations of this finding, it is nevertheless an interesting commentary on the importance of the "human touch" in behavioral health care.

## Contact Us!

We want to create an active and vibrant community of individuals and organizations interested in benchmarking, performance management, and outcomes. 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).

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