

Children's Need Assessment Process

Westmoreland County Behavioral Health and Developmental Services has developed a tiered needs assessment process to make informed decisions regarding children's behavioral health services in the county; the purpose or expected outcome of our process will be to provide the county needed information to make decisions regarding, but not limited to, access to services, quality of services, availability of specialized treatment and support services, and to address any potential system issues and needs.

To carry out the children's need assessment functions, there will be two key groups involved throughout the process: the core group and the advisory committee. The core group is a small group of key stakeholders including county behavioral health staff, managed care organization representatives, base service unit representation, and representatives from our oversight entity; most of the work completed in the needs assessment process will occur within this group of participants. The advisory committee is a small group of persons representing various human service organizations and interests, family members, youth, and advocates; this committee's primary role is to offer advice and consultation to the core group about the needs assessment findings and process.

There are two types of a need assessment: a comprehensive needs assessment and a triage needs assessment process; each of these is described below in more detail. At any time, questions about the process may be directed to the Westmoreland County BH/DS office at 724-830-3617.



1 Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Comprehensive needs assessment process will be completed in Westmoreland County every three (3) years; this process will examine each program that provides behavioral health services to children (ages birth to 21) in Westmoreland County. The children's needs assessment process is anticipated to begin in 2017. Once completed, the process may identify the following:

- Gaps in Service (geographic needs, level of service needs, specialty treatment needs, etc)
- Utilization patterns-what services need more/less resources
- Access to services-is the current system and array of services accessible and adequate?

- 1. Core group roles** Identify what the comprehensive needs assessment process will accomplish (what do we want to know) and identify what data and information will be needed to accomplish our process. The core group will present findings to Advisory Committee
- 2. Advisory Committee role** Advise and offer feedback to core group on strategic plan for comprehensive needs assessment, participate in review of findings and assist with the prioritization and development of a work plan to address the needs
- 3. Who, what, how, when** The comprehensive needs assessment process is anticipated to begin in 2017; prior to the start of this in-depth needs assessment process, the Advisory Committee and the core group will work together to finalize the scope of the assessment process and prioritize anticipated outcomes. The comprehensive needs assessment process may include a variety of activities such as focus groups, review of past and current service utilization, etc.
- 4. Begin Review** The length of time to complete the comprehensive needs assessment will be determined by planning priorities identified by the core group and the Advisory Committee
- 5. Findings and response** At the conclusion of the comprehensive needs assessment process, a work plan and schedule will be developed that identifies the findings of our assessment process and next steps to address each finding. Each outcome area will be identified for a comprehensive service review for future program development

2 Triage Need Assessment Process

For circumstances when a potential need is identified in the community and a timely response is necessary, the triage needs assessment process may be initiated. The triage process can be initiated with a written request from a parent, community member, provider, or system partner; this process is to be used for decision making purposes and service planning (examples: expansion and/or addition of a children's behavioral health program, data collection for a grant proposal, etc)

- 1. Identification of need**

When a parent, individual, system, or organization, feels that there is an unmet need or service in the county, they may initiate the triage need assessment process with a written request; this written request is made to the county BH/DS office and should identify the specific unmet need, supporting documentation/rationale and expected outcome. *The triage needs assessment process is not to be utilized for individual consumer needs or crisis/emergency situations; this process is to address the unmet needs of the child and adolescent behavioral health system.* The triage needs assessment process will be used when a decision is needed regarding a system services need for children and families.
- 2. First Core Group meeting**

The request is received and the needs assessment process begins with the core group meeting to review the request and make decisions regarding the type of information and data that may be necessary. This first core group meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible following receipt of the written request. Based on the nature of the triage needs request, the core group will determine the amount of time necessary to complete the review. Most reviews are expected to be completed within 45 business days however extenuating circumstance may occur which can delay the completion of the process.
- 3. Review of data analysis and final determination**

After the data collection is complete, the core group will meet once again to review and analyze the data; the core group members will reach a decision to the triage need request and determine if additional action is needed to address request.
- 4. Response to request**

Following the second core group discussion, a written response will be made to the requestor which will include a final determination of need. In some cases, additional actions and/or additional information is needed to make an informed decision; when this occurs, an additional 45 days may be needed to complete our review
- 5. Advisory committee**

During quarterly meetings with the Advisory Committee, all triage needs assessment requests and outcomes will be shared with the Advisory Committee