



INNOVATION PLAN APPROVAL SUMMARY

San Diego County Innovation

Name of Innovative Program: Care Giver Connection to Treatment

Total Requested for Innovation: \$685,500

Duration of Innovative Program: Three Years

Staff Recommends: APPROVAL

Review History

County Submitted Innovation Plan: February 9, 2015

MHSOAC Vote regarding Plan Approval: February 26, 2015

Innovation Plan Summary

San Diego County is seeking the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission's approval for their Innovative Program, Care Giver Connection to Treatment (CGCT). The primary purpose is to increase access to services for underserved groups: parents and other caregivers of children ages 0-5 with complex emotional, behavioral and developmental issues. Caregiving is associated with high levels of depressive symptoms and anxiety and lower levels of perceived health. The burden of caregiving can include physical, psychological, emotional, social and financial consequences, including a higher risk of mortality. Caregivers who are overwhelmed with caring for a child with complex needs typically do not access mental health and drug and alcohol services for themselves. San Diego County's Innovative Program will evaluate the extent of the need for caregiver mental health treatment and connection to resources and the impact of this treatment and linkage not only for the caregiver, but also for those whose care they provide. The program intends to increase caregiver satisfaction and also improve overall emotional, behavioral and developmental gains for the child.

The CGCT will augment a program that serves children 0-5 by providing screening, information about stressors associated with caregiving, and support for the caregiver's behavioral health needs. It is estimated that at least 200 caregivers will receive screening and that 50 percent will need and accept program services. A clinician will offer specialty groups to address caregivers' symptomology such as depression, anxiety, and co-occurring disorders. Supporting the caregiver in their own mental health and recovery is expected to increase their availability for their child, which ultimately will enhance the whole family's quality of life and wellbeing.

The program will also provide a Parent Care Coordinator (PCC) to connect parents in need of individual behavioral health services to appropriate resources. The PCC will act as the liaison between the child's treatment team and the caregiver clinician. With the advent of the Affordable Care Act and parity for behavioral health, mental health services are more widely available to caregivers, and it is hoped that this program will help make a meaningful connection to these expanded resources.

Evaluation:

Other systems have utilized family partners and/or other staff to engage and support caregivers, however there is no available data on the impact of this support on caregivers of children under age five who are in treatment for serious mental, emotional, and behavioral issues. The CGCT program anticipates learning if the identified new approaches will lead to improved access to mental health services for unserved and underserved caregivers of these children and if program approaches lead to improved outcomes for their children. An evaluation component embedded within the program will include baseline measures, quarterly and annual reports and recommendations, with a final project review to determine program effectiveness and identify system impact and the most successful practices. This analysis will include a review of new and adapted strategies that may increase the feasibility of the program for future replication.

The independent program evaluation will measure:

- Whether and how much access increased from baseline
- If access varied at baseline and differed over time for subpopulations (e.g., caregivers who are married versus single, if a caregiver has other children, if a caregiver is employed, racial/ethnic minorities)
- Impact of connecting caregivers to treatment on the progress of the child enrolled in the program
- Families' satisfaction and what programmatic variables they found to be helpful

The contracted evaluator will compile data into a Tool Kit to be made available to San Diego County's Children Youth and Families System of Care.