



Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force  
Report to the community  
and strategic Plan

2010-2012



**Mission Statement:** The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force is committed to being a leader in identifying issues faced by all people affected by mental illness, facilitating improvements in mental health services, giving consumers and families a strong voice, reducing stigma, and implementing recovery principles.

The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force provides a forum where different sectors of the mental health delivery system come together to address and resolve issues of interest to all people affected by mental illness. The task force has over 45 members organizations including consumer groups, advocacy organizations, providers, law enforcement, and other community stakeholders.

# Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force

## The Scope of the Challenge for the MHTF

The MHTF is committed to promoting mental health by increasing access to recovery oriented, consumer centered services and decreasing stigma. Although mental illnesses are common and treatable, there are many barriers to accessing services.

*Mental illness is more widely prevalent than many people think.* A noted Surgeon General's report indicated that 21% of the adult population experiences some type of mental health disorder. In Milwaukee, an estimated 155,967 people ages

15 and over experience mental health problems that range in nature and severity. About 1 in 7 children are currently in need of treatment in Milwaukee County (37,000) according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates.

*The human cost of mental illness is substantial.* Mental illness is comparable to cardiovascular disease and cancer in terms of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY), that is, the years of life lost to premature death and/or lived with a disability. The DALY for cardiovascular disease is 18.6; for cancer the DALY is 15.0; and for mental illness, it is 15.4. Clearly, mental illness exacts a tremendous toll on individuals, families, and communities.

*There is growing concern about the high rate of mental health problems among correctional inmates.* The U.S. Department of Justice put the rates of mental health problems at 45% for federal prisoners, 56% for state correctional inmates, and 64% for persons held in local jails.

*Veterans face a high risk of mental health problems as well.* A recent RAND survey of veterans who had served in Iraq or Afghanistan determined that 14% experienced PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and 14% had Major Depression.

*Homelessness is strongly correlated with mental illness.* Forty-one percent (41.0%) of the homeless adults interviewed for the Milwaukee Continuum of Care 2009 Point in Time Survey said that they had or had been told they had mental illness. Among key populations such as the unsheltered and chronically homeless, the proportion with mental illness is even higher.

*The need for services is substantial.* In 2008, there were 6,350 admissions to psychiatric hospitals; 64% were to the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division. Moreover, BHD provided 80% of the patient days of psychiatric care provided in Milwaukee County in 2008.

*Access to mental health services is inequitable.* Although treatment works, many people cannot access it because of limited insurance coverage, the lack of mental health parity, and the shortage of providers who accept Medicaid. Public funding has not kept pace with the growing needs in the community and is too heavily reliant on limited county funds. Racial and ethnic minorities may face additional barriers to access and to securing culturally competent care.

# Goals

## STRATEGIC PLAN: 2010-2012

**1 Goal 1:** Successfully advocate for the inclusion of recovery-oriented, consumer-focused principles in the formulation of plans to redesign the community mental health system.

- Participate in redesign efforts at the highest decision-making levels.
- Advance a focused agenda representing the MHTF's mission and core principles.
- Forge sustainable, reciprocal policymaking relationships with stakeholders.

**2 Goal 2:** Substantially reduce the involvement of persons with mental illness in the criminal justice system and improve the quality of treatment available to people within the system.

- At the *community* level: Increase the number of law enforcement personnel with Crisis Intervention Training and enhance the community's awareness of the availability of this resource in crisis situations; and improve appropriate use of the Crisis Resource Center.
- At the *criminal* justice system level: Support system enhancements that include universal screening, integration of records, use of diversion, and deferred prosecution.
- At the *corrections* level: Raise the level of awareness and knowledge about mental health needs within jails and prisons; and increase the use of peer support and recovery-based tools in correctional settings.

**3 Goal 3:** In collaboration with other organizations, greatly expand access to recovery-focused mental health services for youth in Milwaukee.

- Identify and participate in community efforts to conduct outreach and education with parents, youth workers, teachers and mentors to increase knowledge of mental health needs and resources.
- Support efforts to teach key adults how to use mental health screening and assessment tools to identify youth in need of mental health services.
- Advocate the use of WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) for youth, incorporating the principles of peer support and recovery-focused tools.
- Expand the representation of youth-serving agencies, especially youth mental health service providers, on the MHTF.

**4 Goal 4:** Strengthen the capacity of the MHTF to advocate policies and programs that facilitate improvements in mental health services, give consumers and families a strong voice, reduce stigma, and implement recovery principles.

- Strengthen the internal organization of the MHTF by improving communication, work group structure, and effectiveness of meetings.
- Energize membership through greater diversity, enhanced participation, and stronger commitments.
- Broadly publicize the MHTF's work as a strategy to increase community awareness and continually recruit new, committed members.

### **Guiding Principle 1: Leadership**

The Mental Health Task Force will be the leading voice and take courageous stands on issues of importance to people with mental illness in Milwaukee County. We will serve as organized, strategic, and proactive agents for change on the issues we address.

### **Guiding Principle 2: Task Force mindset**

The Task Force is committed to the concept that everyone is equal and everyone plays a role. Consumers of mental health services will have a strong voice and leadership roles in all aspects of the Task Force. Task Force members will strive to set aside self interest for the good of the overall organization, and will follow through on their commitments.

### **Guiding Principle 3: Recovery**

The Task Force will take a Recovery orientation in all aspects of our activities, including maintaining a strong consumer-centered focus and working to ensure that Recovery principles are incorporated in all elements of mental health system reform and service delivery.

### **Guiding Principle 4: Commitment to the community**

The Task Force believes that people of all ages with mental illness deserve high quality services delivered in community settings of their choosing. We also promote the concept that the entire community needs to be responsive to and accountable for all its members, including those with psychiatric disabilities.

### **Guiding Principle 5: Respecting diversity**

The Task Force membership will strive to be reflective of the Milwaukee community, and will work to continually improve our cultural competence across all racial, ethnic, sexual orientation and disability-related cultures.

### **Guiding Principle 6: Education**

The Mental Health Task Force will serve as an educational resource to the Milwaukee community, including the general public, elected officials, the media, and public and private mental health service delivery systems on the issues faced by people with mental illness. In all our communications we will strive to reduce stigma and stereotypical attitudes that create additional barriers for people with mental illness.

### **Guiding Principle 7: Communication Hub**

The Task Force will serve as a coalition of coalitions, sharing our information and resources broadly and serving as a clearinghouse for best practices in mental health service delivery.



## 2008-09 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Milwaukee Mental Health Summit III - Mapping a New Road to Recovery: Addressing Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System held June 30, 2008, drawing 250 local practitioners, policymakers, and consumers.
- A comprehensive plan developed to address mental illness in the criminal justice system including support for community-based policing, Crisis Intervention Training, the Crisis Resource Center, universal screening of all persons booked into the jail to identify mental health issues, creation of a mechanism to share data between the behavioral health and criminal justice systems to facilitate early identification and appropriate treatment, increased use of diversion and deferred prosecution, peer support in the jail, and improved coordination of services for individuals re-entering the community from prison.
- More than 200 Milwaukee Police Department and 180 Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department personnel in total have received CIT (Crisis Intervention Training), continuing the MHTF's commitment to having CIT-trained officers readily available to respond to crisis situations throughout the Milwaukee community.
- Development of a network of Crisis Intervention Partners (CIP) which has extended Crisis Intervention Training to emergency personnel, health care professionals, correctional officers and others.
- Technical assistance and support provided by MHTF members to the development and implementation of the new Crisis Resource Center which served 540 individuals in mental health crisis since opening in December 2007.
- MHTF involvement in key strategic planning efforts including Milwaukee County's implementation of a 1915i Waiver to enhance funding and delivery of community services, and the Adult Mental Health System Redesign Initiative in collaboration with Milwaukee Health Care Partnership, Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division, Public Policy Forum, and other stakeholders.
- Changes to the MHTF itself which have increased its diversity and effectiveness including greater African American and Latino involvement, task-oriented work groups, expanded steering committee, and strategic planning emphasis.
- Successful and continuing efforts to ensure that there are peer support specialists in all parts of the mental health treatment system.
- Collaboration with other mental health and veteran-service organizations to convene the Wisconsin Warriors Summit in October 2009.

accomplishments

# MILWAUKEE MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:

Abri Health Plan  
Acacia Mental Health Clinic  
American Red Cross  
ARC of Greater Milwaukee, Inc.  
Aurora Health Care  
Behavior Health Provider Group  
Benedict Center  
Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin  
Bob and Linda Davis Family Fund  
Cenpatico Behavioral Health  
Centene  
Charles E. Kubly Foundation  
Columbia College of Nursing  
Community Advocates  
Community Care  
The Counseling Center of Milwaukee, Inc.  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Disability Rights Wisconsin  
Division of Community Corrections  
Dryhootch of America  
Encompass Effective Mental Health Services  
Faye McBeath Foundation  
Grand Avenue Club  
Greater Milwaukee Foundation  
Health Care for the Homeless  
Impact  
IndependenceFirst  
I-Care  
Jewish Community Mental Health Education  
Project  
Justice 2000  
La Causa  
Legal Aid Society  
Managed Health Services  
Make It Work Milwaukee  
Medical College of Wisconsin  
Mental Health America of Wisconsin  
Milwaukee Center for Independence  
Milwaukee Clinicians of Color  
Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division  
Milwaukee County Disability Services Division  
Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office  
Milwaukee County Housing Division  
Milwaukee County Pretrial Services  
Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office  
Milwaukee Health Department  
Milwaukee Latino Health Coalition  
Milwaukee Police Department  
NAMI Greater Milwaukee  
Our Space  
Rogers Memorial Hospital  
Schizophrenics Understood Inc.  
Sixteenth Street Community Health Center  
Social Rehab  
Sojourner Family Peace Center, Inc.  
State Public Defender's Office  
Transitional Living Services  
United Way of Greater Milwaukee  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Veterans Association  
Vital Voices for Mental Health  
Warmline, Inc.  
Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare  
Wilberg Community Planning, LLC  
Wisconsin Community Services  
Youth Mental Health Connection



For more information and to participate in our work, please contact:  
Disability Rights Wisconsin  
414-773-4646.  
[www.milwaukeeemhtf.org](http://www.milwaukeeemhtf.org)

*Support for the work of the MHTF has been provided by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.*

