

MENTAL HEALTH, CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY/HOUSING ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN – SUMMARY REPORT – JULY 2012

The City of Tacoma, Human Rights and Human Services, performed an environmental scan in May of 2012 with results compiled through July. Identified as a key element of Phase I of the Mental Health and Chemical Dependency (MHCD) Funding Program Implementation Plan (hereinafter, the “plan”), the scan provided data identifying agencies and programs currently engaged in providing services throughout Tacoma addressing mental health, chemical dependency, housing, and criminal justice services for the MHCD population. The results of the scan are being used to assist the City in identifying current community strengths as well as clarify areas where gaps may be identified in current service provision.

The survey tool was divided into two categories: direct (survey A) and non-direct (survey B) service providers¹. In total there were over 100 surveys distributed with 78 completed. Along with a demographic analysis, questions allowed for subjective responses. The subjective responses are helping to drive directives for Phase II of the Plan; the gaps analysis but are not reflected in this report.

Survey A Responses

Identification of services provided by type and age category:			
	Adult	Youth (K-20)	Infants and Toddlers
Mental Health Services	27	13	7
Numbers Served 2011	9212	3117	342
Co-Occurring Disorders	1422	252	22
MH Residential Services	273	1	
Inpatient MH Services	375	23	
Crisis Services	9130	337	35
Criminal Justice Diversion Services	8	3	0
Pre-booking	620	20	
Pre-trial		5	
In custody	1056	44	
Discharge planning	895	5	
Chemical Dependency Services	19	5	1
Numbers Served 2011	5189	735	99
	Adult	Family	Youth (K-20)
Housing Services	21	18	
Numbers Served 2011	526	243	269

¹ Direct service providers were identified as housing or behavioral health care providers serving individuals or families impacted by one or more of the following challenges; mental health, chemical dependency, homelessness. Non-direct providers were organizations or businesses impacted by encounters with individuals who have chemical dependency or mental health issues.

Survey B Responses

Responses identified percentage of clients encountered with unmet needs.			
Area of Need Identified	Mental Health	Chemical Dependency	Homelessness
Percentage of unmet needs	82	77	91

Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of availability of services within the Tacoma city limit relative to mental health, chemical dependency and homelessness services. Respondents were offered the option to select “did not know”. Considering responses from all who had knowledge, the results are as follows:

- 3 – Services are available on demand
- 2 – Services are available but difficult to access
- 1 – Services are not available

Responses to perception of availability of services						
	Mental Health		Chemical Dependency		Homelessness	
	Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth
Overall scaled rating	2	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1

The Environmental scan responses represent a single step of multiple steps planned to assist the City in developing effective and efficient services to benefit Tacoma citizens. Studies clearly identify that Tacoma has a robust and diverse social service delivery system. While too early to draw conclusions, early analysis of objective and subjective responses, when added to input from the MHCD Citizen Advisory Group, provided the following insights into potential gaps in service delivery:

- Funding concerns limit access to adults with mental health and/or chemical dependency challenges
- Unaccompanied youth, chemically dependent and/or who suffer from co-occurring disorders have less access to services than adults or youth in families and those with single disorders
- Intensive outpatient treatment for adults/ youth with co-occurring disorders need improvement
- Specialized co-occurring disorder treatment requires further study
- Coordination of care in mental health, chemical dependency and homelessness can be improved
- After hour services, including weekend services, need improvement
- Increased need for outreach and engagement with community stakeholders to identify access to resources for non-service providers engaged with individuals with mental health and/or chemical dependency challenges; access is difficult for non-service providers
- Representation and associated costs in the correction system are disproportionate for adult and juveniles with mental health challenges

These areas will continue to be explored and refined in the next phase where a formal gaps analysis will be conducted in partnership with the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (planned to be completed in October, 2012).