

METRO CRISIS (TRIAGE) SERVICES

Project Overview

The Metro Crisis Triage Project is an ambitious regional health care initiative whose mission is to “*Create a 24/7, year-round, community-based system of crisis intervention services from which people experiencing mental health and/or substance abuse crisis can be safely and effectively stabilized and efficiently linked to appropriate follow-up care and services.*” Other than local hospital emergency departments, no other 24/7/365 crisis system currently exists in any of the Metro Denver counties.

Significant changes and challenges occurring in Colorado’s mental health and criminal justice systems led to the development of the project, including:

- the escalating number of people seeking crisis care and urgent psychiatric care presenting at hospital emergency rooms;
- the continuing shrinkage of inpatient psychiatric hospital beds;
- the alarming number of jail inmates who have a mental illness.

MHAC’s role in facilitating the development and implementation of the Metro Crisis Services (Triage) Project began in May 2006 when metro Denver’s largest hospital corporations -- HealthONE, Centura Health, and Exempla Healthcare – contributed \$75,000 each to MHAC to underwrite research and planning for a metro crisis system specifically for mental health and substance abuse. Soon after, The Colorado Health Foundation matched the hospitals’ collective contributions with a \$220,000 grant to MHAC – resulting in \$445,000 of initial funding to support research, planning and development of the Metro Crisis Triage Project.

With this infusion of financial support, MHAC recruited a multi-disciplinary group of leaders and subject experts to serve on the project’s Advisory Committee and Work Groups, and contracted with behavioral healthcare consultants to help guide the research and planning efforts. As a result of all these efforts, the Metro Crisis Triage Project emerged with its’ mission, service design, business plan, and an inspiring vision: “*Metro Crisis Services will be metro Denver’s regional system of crisis intervention, offering highly skilled, hope-filled care to individuals and families in crisis – especially those in the throws of mental health and/or substance abuse crisis. We believe that whether it is the first or one of many experiences, if treated in an atmosphere of respect and compassion, crisis can be a unique opportunity for individuals and families to connect to life changing treatment, support and education.*”

Once operational, Metro Crisis Services will offer an array of appropriate, timely, and recovery-oriented services including phone-based crisis interventions, professional assessments, urgent psychiatric care, and peer and family education and support -- twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year. The new system of crisis care will serve the seven counties of metropolitan Denver: Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Boulder, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties. Metro Crisis Services will operate on two levels:

- 1) A Coordinated metro-wide Crisis Call Center and Information Technology system that will respond to an estimated 100,000 calls per year; and
- 2) Crisis Centers Located in Three Communities - Serving all of Metro Denver – to provide support, stabilization and treatment to over 6,000 people in crisis each year.

<i>The Crisis Response System</i>	<i>The Crisis Centers (3 Centers)</i>
<p><u>Crisis Phone Services</u> Live Coverage 24/7; Crisis Intervention; Assessment; Referral</p> <p><u>Resource Coordination</u> Inpatient beds tracking; Direct Admits; BH Treatment Connection and Availability</p> <p><u>Patient Info. Systems</u> Enrollment Info.; Frequent User Tracking; Pt. Information Sharing</p> <p><u>Training</u> First responders; Security; Transporters</p>	<p><u>Walk-In</u> Assessment, Crisis Counseling, RN/MD Consult, Direct Pt. Admissions</p> <p><u>Crisis Stabilization Units (CSU)</u> RN and MD Care; 23 Hour Observation; Acute Crisis Beds; Voluntary & Involuntary Treatment; Disposition Planning</p> <p><u>Peer and Family Services</u> Peer-to-Peer and Family-to-Family support, education, and care coordination</p> <p><u>Transportation</u> Between ER's and the Crisis Centers</p>

Recognizing the need for and the potential of this project, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) recently awarded MHAC a \$478,500 Local Funding Partners matching grant in support of the project. The Colorado Health Foundation, among other local funders, will collectively match the RWJF grant.

Now in the advanced stages of planning, a call center provider with an outstanding reputation, expertise in triaging crisis calls, state-of-the-art evaluation systems, and a proven track record in working with hospitals, law enforcement, health care providers, and, most importantly, individuals and families in crisis, has been selected. It is anticipated that the Call Center and the first of three Crisis Centers will be launched in 2009; the second and third Crisis Centers will open in 2012 and 2014.

Buoyed by the support of local hospital corporations and foundations, and now the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), Metro Crisis Services is proactively seeking public and private funds to turn the crisis system dream into a reality.

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