

Department of Public Health Informational Survey-2014
Health Resource Planning for Behavioral Health Services

Response to question 2.

In respect to the Mental Health and Substance Abuse services one area that I would like to see more about is MENTORING at risk youths. There is something to be said for Mentoring Services. They are difficult to come by in our central MA area. Every child needs to feel the importance of their being and needs to have someone that they can confide in and identify with. As we live in a very media and technologically driven society we lose the human connection. By identifying children that may benefit from Mentoring services we are potentially offering them opportunity for greater success in school and exploring other areas of interest and personal growth. The goal of the Mentor in the short term is to discourage substance abuse and encourage healthy living as a lifestyle helping to connect the at risk youth to various other services as needed. The long term goal is that the youth is given the knowledge base that there are many services that are available if needed.

Response to question 3.

Given the importance of prevention and “post-acute” services for mental health and substance abuse one of the key areas that our community in Gardner MA and the surrounding areas struggle with is transportation to these services. We live in an isolated community therefore getting to follow up appointments, counseling, day treatment, support groups etc.... is very difficult. Due to location of services which are primarily out of town people who may be struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues are at a disadvantage. MASS Health insurance does provide transportation for selected members depending on insurance status however, not all.

People are discharged from programs/hospitals/detoxes are unable to obtain consistent reliable transportation. In order to increase the success rate for members in our community they need transportation services. This must be part of the aftercare which should be effective immediately. Doing this would not be enabling the person but offer them the ability to make recovery a possibility by eliminating gaps in their care.

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Alternatives is a non-profit human services agency currently serving over 2000 adults with developmental and psychiatric disabilities in 55 residential, employment and day programs throughout Central Massachusetts. For more information about Alternatives please visit our website at www.alternativesnet.org or call us at (508) 234-6232.