

Please accept this email in response to the DPH Informational Survey sent to Southcoast Hospitals.

Question 1. Behavioral health resources are ever changing and difficult to keep track of. If Health Resource Planning could maintain a data base of the behavioral health resources available to Massachusetts, that was accessible to health care clinicians, it would most importantly save time, and also ensure accuracy and availability of the resources identified/provided. Southcoast Social Workers are connecting patients to resources constantly, and having access to updated behavioral health resources would allow us to connect patients to services effectively and accurately.

Question 2. Resources for children and families – specifically, community based acute treatment programs (CBAT/ICBAT), wrap around family services, and services to families with autistic or special needs children. Please consider that Massachusetts has no specific inpatient psychiatric unit for children on the Autism spectrum and wait lists for ABA services are too long (at least in the New Bedford area) to be considered a reasonable treatment plan for families and children in crisis.

Question 3. In the New Bedford area, there is a gap in service for post acute adults who are either dually diagnosed, or have major mental illness. Rapid readmissions to inpatient psychiatric, dual diagnosis, and detoxification units are the consequence. Partial hospitalization programs and outpatient psychiatrist services are lacking. Expansion of services in this area would be helpful. Access to post acute substance abuse residential programs is not possible from inpatient medical units. Hospital Social Workers are unable to effectively care plan for patients who are medically admitted and require post detoxification treatment. We cannot access TSS or CCS units, holdings or Half-way Houses.

Question 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for all of your efforts to assist behavioral health care in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Pam Opheim-Newhall, LICSW  
Social Work Team Leader, Emergency Dept.  
Southcoast Hospitals Group