



It is Essential for the State to Reduce Unmet Demand in the Children's Mental Health and Substance Use Services System

It is imperative that the state adequately support the provision of a full continuum of community based care that addresses the specific needs of children and youth through reimbursement rates that maintain the viability of provider organizations, capital funding that supports expansion to meet unmet demand and Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) that develop and maintain a qualified workforce.

The Staggering Need

Almost one in five young people have a mental health or substance use disorder at any given time. In New Jersey, 162,939 children will have a Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) in 2015¹. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports that approximately 63,000 New Jersey youth aged 12-17 reported using illicit drugs within the month prior to their survey.²

Unmet Demand

In 2011, of an estimated 165,217 children and youth with SED in New Jersey, only 27,500, less than one in five, were enrolled in the Children's System of Care (CSOC).¹ According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health, annually, four percent of 12 to 17 year olds in the state, over 28,000, will need but not receive treatment for alcohol use; an identical number will need but not receive treatment for other substance use.³

Financial Costs and Damaged Lives

"Many disorders have life-long effects that include high psychosocial and economic costs, not only for the young people, but also for their families, schools, and communities."⁴ While the financial costs nationally for treatment and lost productivity are great - estimated at \$247 billion annually - the costs to the young people's lives, such as difficulty establishing healthy interpersonal relationships, succeeding in school and becoming part of the workforce, can have life-long impacts.

Treatment and Support Services are Effective and Economical

"Making use of the evidence-based interventions already at hand could potentially save billions of dollars by preventing or mitigating disorders that would otherwise require expensive treatment."⁴ Research supports the value of several approaches to enhancing the psychological and emotional well-being of children, all of which can be found within the community based behavioral health system here in New Jersey. For example, 96% of crisis calls to Mobile Response Crisis Teams resulted in a child being able to stay safely in their current living arrangement. Community Based Services in the CSOC are estimated to cost an average of \$918 per youth served in FY 2014.

¹ New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. *2014-2015 Block Grant Application*. p. 139.

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Behavioral Health Barometer: New Jersey, 2013*. HHS Publication No. SMA-13-4796NJ. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2013.

³ Office of Adolescent Health. *Adolescent Health Facts Substance Abuse Data for New Jersey*. <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-health-topics/substance-abuse/states/pdfs/nj.pdf>

⁴ National Research Council. *Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2009.