Healthy Transitions Initiative

Access to Flexible Funds

Young adults, ages 14 to 25 years old, face a number of challenges that are barriers to their success in a variety of life domains. One barrier is the inability to access specialized funds in a timely manner. The ability to access funds, in an urgent or planned manner, could reduce barriers and assist them in reaching goals and promoting long term success.

 Young adults involved in the HTI meet diagnostic criteria for eligibility for the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Comprehensive Psychiatric Rehabilitation (CPR) services. However, it is recognized that successes in the following domain areas are important for improving outcomes and promoting recovery: employment & career, educational opportunity, living situations, and community life functioning. Occasionally, flexible funds are required to support young adults achieve outcomes and improve recovery.

Examples of how flexible funds have been used to assist young adults include the following:

- Accessing birth certificates or identification
- Fees to obtain drivers licenses
- Emergency basic needs
- Uniforms for employment
- Startup funds for housing/ bedding
- Bus passes
- Housing

Department of Mental Health Flexible Funds

The current DMH purchase of service catalogue includes a code called **wraparound.** This service is included for youth and adults programs. The following are the definitions from the POS catalogue:

Youth wrap-around services are based upon the philosophy of child and family driven service provision. This philosophy includes providing whatever services are required to keep children in regular home, school, and community placements. Youth wrap-around service(s) will consist of one or more direct or indirect services provided to or for a child or family and may include one or more of the umbrella services necessary to help insure the functional success of the child in the community. Types of services which may be provided under this definition include: respite, transportation supports, social-recreational supports, basic needs supports, clinical/medical supports, or other supports.

Adult community support expansion services are used to increase supports to persons living in the community by providing whatever services are required to maintain individuals who are living and/or working in the community and to promote and facilitate community inclusion. Adult wraparound service(s) will consist of one or more direct or indirect services provided to an adult and may include one or more of the umbrella services necessary to help insure the functional success of the individual in the community. Types of services which may be provided under this definition include but are not limited to: respite, transportation supports, social-recreational supports, basic

needs supports, clinical/medical supports, or other supports.

Eligible Provider(s)
Documentation and
Other Requirements

The requirements are consistent between the adult and youth programs and are as follows:

Eligible Providers: Appropriately trained individual(s).
Vendors are expected to track expenditures by categories and submit a breakdown with each invoice that accounts for the expenditure category, specific activity provided, client number, service units provided and total expenditure and, provider of the service.

Wrap-around Expenditure Categories
Respite: Funds for emergency or planned in-home or out-of-home respite care.
Transportation: Funds to help the individual get to needed services and supports.
Social-Recreational: Funds to enable the individual to participate in activities to which it is difficult to get access due to distance, cost, or inadequate supports.
Basic Needs: Funds to assist in meeting basic needs of the individual on a temporary and/or emergency basis.
*Clinical/Medica*l: Funds to facilitate meeting the individual's treatment goals or to meet non-psychiatric treatment needs that cannot be met through other means.
Other: All other expenditures including crisis, legal, and training/vocational

Healthy Transition Initiative (HTI)

The four community mental health centers receive an allocation of $1,500 per agency from the HTI cooperative agreement to utilize to meet the needs of the young adults enrolled. These young adults are also enrolled in the DMH CPR program. Since the HTI $1500 funding ends with the end of the cooperative agreement, alternative strategies for funding are needed to ensure that resources are available to continue to maintain outcomes and continue to promote recovery post cooperative agreement funding.

Local Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC) demonstration agencies developed procedures and forms to request and document the use of HTI flexible funds. CMHC demonstration agencies utilize flexible funds based on the young adults' treatment plan and documented clinical need.

Two CMHC demonstration agencies have provided examples of the internal agency protocol, forms and documentation guidelines. These resources, along with the HTI process, are available for review if needed.

Some agencies participating in the HTI demonstration site are utilizing the DMH wrap-around billing category and others are not. It is not known if this code is being utilized by the adult departments. Truman Medical Center has a protocol for the Futures Department and Swope has a protocol for the children's department to request and document the use of wrap-around funds.

Resolutions for consideration

The following ideas are suggested for action to address the barriers to access flexible funds in the community mental health centers and other organizations serving young adults.

Department of Mental Health

Consider changing the name of the POS catalog code from **wrap-around** to **recovery supports** or something more descriptive. The language utilized for the funding could potentially be a barrier in creating broad based knowledge.

Provide written guidance on the use and documentation for use of the code to the community mental health centers including the children and adult services departments. The Department of Mental Health could provide information to clarify the following points:

- The Department of Mental Health provide direction to the CMHC's regarding the appropriate use of the funds by identifying common examples and approved procedures. Perhaps posting this on the frequently asked questions of the website and discussing this with Clinical Directors or other representatives of the community mental health centers.
- Identify any restrictions on the use of the funds or specific guidance for requests and documentation that community mental health centers should consider in the development of agency policies or protocols. Post example of procedures used by some agencies on the website as guidance.
- Determine if there are any issues related to CIMOR that would pose barriers in billing by the community mental health centers.

Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC)

The four CMHC demonstration agencies have unique systems, processes and a variety of funding that can be used to respond to emergency needs of the populations they serve. Therefore, processes will need to be individualized per agency to develop or sustain the access to flexible funds. The ability for staff to access funds to overcome barriers is also a need in the development of programs and services that are specific to the young adult population.

Some recommendations are as follows for community mental health centers:

- CMHC's could establish a line item in the budget or cost center to assist in the utilization and management of POS funds for wraparound/ flexible funds.
- CMHS's may also have access to funds other than DMH that could be utilized to meet the emergency needs for young adults. Internal processes should be utilized to identify funds, eligibility, restrictions and protocols for access and documentation. Policies, guidelines and staff training should be developed to assure communication throughout the organization.
- Agencies may want to determine if there internal processes to access petty cash or checks respond to immediate needs.

- Internal training may be needed to appropriately train staff on the approved uses of DMH wrap-around funds, including billing or accounting procedures. Agency protocol for requesting and documenting flexible fund utilization should be developed, if it does not currently exist. Agencies may need to determine current utilization to assess if flexible funds are equally available through both the children and adult departments.

Community Stakeholders, Coordinating Council and HTI State Team

Information was shared with the HTI State Team regarding the local sites use of flexible funds and the need to identify sustainability plans for current cooperative agreement dollars allocated for this purpose. The HTI State Team recommended the site follow up with local agencies to identify existing resources and coordinate planning to utilize funds currently available. According to information shared at the HTI State Team meeting, Division of Youth Services has established local councils in some geographic areas that have responded to individualized funding needs. Children's Division, through the Chaffee program, allows funding to support young adults needs to promote independence. Vocational Rehabilitation funding may also be available for some needs.

Action items include:

- Educate partners at the local and state level regarding the need to access funds in a creative, individualized manner to overcome immediate barriers to promote positive outcomes for young adults.
- Establishing clarity from the local agencies to understand availability and eligibility for flexible funds to meet individualized needs of the young adult population.
- Ensure resources information from the children and the adult system providers are considered.
- Future funding or contracts could create mechanisms that allowed the use of funding in a manner that was responsive to immediate barriers that young people face.