

COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK - 2001	COMMUNITY HEALTH (MENTAL HEALTH, PHYSICAL HEALTH, & SUBSTANCE ABUSE) URGENT ISSUES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
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Urgent Issue #1: There are significant mental and physical health disparities among some populations of Travis County.

- Data:*
- The total mortality rate (all causes) for Blacks is 35.6% higher than the population as a whole.
 - The coronary heart disease mortality rate for Blacks is 33.4% higher than the population as a whole.
 - The stroke mortality rates for Blacks are 39.5% higher than that of Whites; and Hispanics rates are 16.3% higher than Whites.
 - The diabetes mortality rate for Hispanics is 73.6% higher than that of Whites; and the Black rate is 70.4% higher than Whites. (Mortality rates are age-adjusted and are ten-year averages (1989-1998).
 - 1999 World Health Organization Report indicates mental illness is the leading cause of disabilities.
 - Higher incidence of mental disorders in ethnic minorities may be related to how mental illness is perceived or the stigma related to mental illness.
 - Persons with mental illness comprise 40-60% of the homeless population.
 - Highest rates of depression are found in low income and low education populations.

Desired Results: Reduction/Elimination of the burden of mental and physical health disparities among targeted populations.

SOLUTIONS	ACTIONS	FINANCIAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	HUMAN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXAMPLES OF ONGOING EFFORTS
Engage in a community exploration of the determinants of health disparities.	1. Seek neighborhood input and direction for exploring health disparities. (Many neighborhood focus groups have already taken place).	Host meetings in the community. Support meeting costs.	Neighborhood groups and members attend meetings and provide input. Provide volunteers to support meetings (facilitate, notes, minutes, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin Travis Co. Health & Human Services • Austin Travis Co. MHMR Center
	2. Coordinate a community forum to share knowledge and seek understanding of health disparities. (A Community conference on health disparities is scheduled for May 31 & June 1).	Community conference opportunities exist for investing.	Volunteers are needed to support the community conference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Texas Communities of Color Health Network

	3. Improve the current data surveillance system to include specific data needed to understand and measure health disparities.	Donate costs to send staff to conferences and/or other communities to assess successful surveillance systems.	Technical assistance in determining technology needs to support data collection in the community.
	4. Develop a focused community education campaign to promote general awareness of mental health and substance abuse as local public health issues.	Public Relations support to develop an awareness campaign.	Volunteers are needed to assist the Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Planning Partnerships in developing educational campaigns to promote awareness.
	5. Develop a plan of action to address the mental health treatment needs of a growing elderly population.	Work with area aging coalitions to develop specific financial investment opportunities.	Volunteers to work with Area Aging organizations to develop a plan.
Implement community-based education and screening services.	Implement community-based education and screening services at six neighborhood centers in Austin.	Not yet identified	Not yet identified
Community-based prevention and outreach services	Implement community-based prevention and outreach mobile services in targeted areas of need not in close proximity to a community center.	Not yet identified	Not yet identified

Urgent Issue #2: There is a lack of focus and sufficient resources to promote creative, effective efforts in preventing illness and injury, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Data:

- An estimated less than one percent of the total health care expenditures goes to prevention efforts.
- Greater than 50 percent of all deaths are preventable.
- Prevention efforts are proven cost effective measures.
- Childhood is an important time to prevent mental disorders and promote mental health.
- Travis County lacks sufficient wellness and prevention programs for persons with mental disorders.
- Travis County has an 11.4 suicide rate per 100,000 population in 1998 compared to the National Target of 6.0 suicide deaths per 100,000 population.
- Prisons and jails have become the alternative to inpatient treatment and serve more persons with mental illness than local psychiatric hospitals.
- Behavioral healthcare plans have different limits, caps, deductibles, etc. than general healthcare. Behavioral health as a percentage of the total healthcare benefit decreased 50% from 1988-1997.
- Childhood disorders are often the genesis for adult mental disorders.

Desired Result: Expanded use of resources (current & new) for creative, effective efforts to promote wellness and healthy lifestyles community-wide.

SOLUTIONS	ACTIONS	FINANCIAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	HUMAN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXAMPLES OF ONGOING EFFORTS
Develop wellness and prevention consortium, partnership.	1. Encourage collaborations between consortium members.	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	• Austin Travis Co. Health & Human Services
	2. Advocate for wellness and prevention programs and resources.	Not yet identified	Volunteers are needed to assist the Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Planning Partnerships in developing educational campaigns to promote awareness.	• Austin Travis Co. MHMR Center
	3. Plan strategies for wellness and prevention activities.	Not yet identified	Volunteers are needed to assist the Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Planning Partnerships in developing educational campaigns to promote awareness.	• University of Texas, School of Nursing

	4. Develop standardized wellness and prevention messages.	Not yet identified	Volunteers are needed to assist the Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Planning Partnerships in developing educational campaigns to promote awareness.	
	5. Coordinate wellness and prevention assessments within targeted neighborhoods.	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	
	6. Train providers on the strength-based, family-driven approach to care for Children’s Mental Health and involve families of children with mental health needs at all levels of the community system of care: policy, practice, and service delivery.	Entities serving children need to collaborate to determine investment opportunities.	Entities serving children need to collaborate to determine investment opportunities.	

Urgent Issue #3: Not all citizens have equal access to mental and physical health care services.

Data:

- Twenty-five percent of all residents of Travis Co. are without health insurance.
- Employment is the leading source of health insurance (70.2%).
- Almost half (47.5%) of the full-time workers are without health insurance coverage.
- Persons with mental illness live in the “most inadequate housing.”
- Stigma and cultural barriers prevent many populations from seeking mental health and substance abuse services.
- In Travis County, persons with mental illness are identified as being underserved by social service agencies that provide basic needs.
- Persons with mental disorders lack sufficient access to new medications that reduce potential side effects.
- Access to private sector psychiatric beds in Austin is decreasing.
- In Travis County, persons with mental illness do not have the same access to employment opportunities as other citizens.
- An estimated one-third of people seeking treatment reported being rejected for health insurance because of their mental condition.
- An emerging trend is developing where parents are relinquishing rights to their children in order to obtain access to needed mental health services.

Desired Result: Improved access to mental and physical health care services to the under-served and uninsured.

SOLUTIONS	ACTIONS	FINANCIAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	HUMAN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXAMPLES OF ONGOING EFFORTS
Lead efforts to maximize efficiency of regional service delivery network.	1. Create a shared information system for the management of care for the uninsured enrolled in the Indigent Care Collaboration (ICC) provider clinics and emergency rooms.	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigent Care Collaboration
	2. Implement an outreach strategy to increase and sustain enrollment in Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medical Assistance Program (MAP), Seton Care Plus and the Employer Initiative.	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin Travis Co. MHMR Center • Substance Abuse Planning Partnership

	<p>3. Increase the availability of mental health and substance abuse service options (funding for new generation medications, housing, employment, etc.)</p>	<p>Medications (Atypicals): \$268 per month per person or \$3,216 a year. There is a shortage of funding in Travis County for 94 persons a year (Total: \$302,304). Housing: \$500 per month (subsidy for rent) per small family or \$6,000 a year with a waiting list of about approximately 150 families per year (Total: \$900,000) Employment: \$300 for a one time cost (clothes, documents, etc for interviews and employment). Approximately 50 persons need this service (Total: \$15,000).</p>	<p>Volunteers are needed to assist the Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Planning Partnerships in developing educational campaigns to promote awareness.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for persons with disabilities to volunteer and work part and full-time.</p>	
<p>Strengthen existing successful programs and study the impact of increased delivery efficiency.</p>	<p>1. Expand the insurance model for the uninsured population through Austin/Travis County MAP and Community Health Clinics or private not-for-profit networks.</p>	<p>Not yet identified</p>	<p>Not yet identified</p>	
	<p>2. Expand access to hospital and specialty care through Seton network (Seton Care Plus).</p>	<p>Not yet identified</p>	<p>Not yet identified</p>	

	3. Implement best practice models in the community	Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Planning Partnerships are initiating discussions and planning efforts to determine investment opportunities.	Volunteers are needed to assist the Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Planning Partnerships in developing educational campaigns to promote awareness.	
Develop strategies for long-term sustainable healthcare financing.	1. Create an affordable local employer initiative for small businesses. (This model assumes participation of four large employers of the ICC in a local purchasing cooperative pilot with governmental and local health care entities).	Meetings to be initiated to determine investment opportunities.	Meetings to be initiated to determine investment opportunities.	
	2. Collaborate with all entities serving children to develop a plan for diverting funding of mental health services from program/agency-based to community-based practices.	Entities serving children need to collaborate to determine investment opportunities.	Entities serving children need to collaborate to determine investment opportunities.	