

County Funding of Services for Persons with Mental Illness in Iowa

Iowa is a rural state. It has 99 counties and nine Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). Although all counties have areas that are rural, the nine Iowa counties that contain a MSA are defined as “urban counties” and the ninety other counties are defined as “rural counties”. Of the 90 counties defined as “rural,” 89/90 have populations less than 30,000.

Systems of mental health service organization in Iowa are county based. Although the state provides accreditation to mental health centers and mental health providers, each county is responsible for the provision of services for persons with serious mental illness who have residence in their county. There are no state mandates for minimum services requirements for persons with serious mental illness. Statewide, there are 37 community mental health centers (CMHC) in Iowa, all of which have an affiliated community support program. Most counties (93/99) have an affiliation with a CMHC and each CMHC center has a catchment area of one to nine counties.

Serious (or chronic) mental illness (SMI/CMI) in adults is defined by the state as 1) psychiatric treatment more intensive than outpatient care more than once in a lifetime, or 2) single episode of continuous, structured, supportive residential care other than hospitalization. In addition, individuals defined as having a serious mental illness are more likely to be unemployable in a competitive work force, require financial assistance for out of hospital maintenance, have a severe inability to establish or maintain a per-

sonal support system, require help in basic living skills or exhibit inappropriate social behavior which results in demand for intervention by the mental health or judicial system.

Characteristics of Case Management in Iowa

Case management does not provide direct client services, but rather is a service that assists clients with access and coordination of available community services. Medicaid pays for most of the case management services for clients that are covered by Iowa’s Medicaid program. The state of Iowa and the client’s county of legal settlement also share in the cost. Case managers are required to have a bachelor’s degree in the human services field or an Iowa license to practice as registered nurses. For persons with a bachelor’s degree one year experience in the delivery of services to the population groups served is required, and three years of experience is required for those with a nursing degree. The Iowa code allows for case management services to be provided in a number of different ways and case managers can be employed by DHS, contracted by the county, or provided by the county itself. Counties are nearly evenly distributed among these options and it is not unusual for counties to provide case management services by a combination of these options. Statewide, there is approximately 1 case manager (.95) per 10,000 population (269 case managers/2,829,259 state population). Case management services in the state are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Case Manager Source

	DHS	Contract	County	Combination	Number of
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			Provider		counties
all counties	31	30	27	11	99
urban counties	3	2	1	3	9
all rural counties	28	28	26	8	90

County funding for Mental Health Services (FY 1994)

Urban counties spend almost two dollars more per capita on mental health services than do rural counties (\$27.93 versus \$26.15). They also spend a higher proportion of their budget on persons with SMI (70% versus 61%). Among rural counties, counties with a CMHC spend almost ten dollars more per capita than counties that have an

out of county affiliation with a CMHC (\$32.29 versus \$22.63). Counties without a CMHC spend an amount of money which is intermediate (\$27.01). The proportion of the mental health budget that is spent on SMI is about the same in all rural counties regardless of presence or affiliation with a CMHC (58-64%). This data is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: County Funding for Mental Health Services (FY 1994)

County Characteristic	Number	Average MI Budget	Average MI Budget per Capita	Average SMI Budget as Percent of MI Budget
all counties	99	\$ 851,488	\$26.41	62%
urban counties	9	\$4,125,800	\$27.93	70%
rural counties	90	\$ 524,057	\$26.15	61%
counties with CMHC in county	36	\$1,763,806	\$32.29	64%
counties with no CMHC in county	63	\$ 330,164	\$23.05	61%
rural counties with CMHC in county	28	\$ 956,375	\$32.58	61%
counties with CMHC by affiliation	57	\$ 310,720	\$22.63	61%
counties with no CMHC in county or by affiliation	6	\$ 514,878	\$27.01	58%