

## *Planning for a Consumer-Directed System*

The majority of mental health block grant funding allocated to the state of Texas is directed to Local Mental Health Authorities as part of their funding to support local system of services for adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances. Many innovative and transformational projects are occurring at the local level across the state. Each community approaches system development in unique ways.

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2001, a portion of mental health block grant funds were retained at the State Mental Health Authority to contract directly for innovative and transformational activities. These funds were expended in four categories:

- Consumer and Family Support
- System Development Projects
- Special Projects for Adults
- Special Projects for Children

Planning for these projects and expenditures was accomplished through a variety of methods. Texas had historically provided funding to four consumer and family support/advocacy organizations. Projects were typically identified by MHPAC members, state and local staff.

Feedback from a variety of stakeholders has directed the Department of State Health Services to reconsider how priority projects will be funded. There has been substantial feedback about the sole source funding that was historically directed to only four organizations. Consumer and family members not associated with the four funded organizations expressed a sense of exclusion. Also, Texas state law demands that contracts be awarded based on competitive processes. Sole source directed funding was transformed to a number of three-year community based projects beginning in Fiscal Year 2005. Those projects will continue through 2008. A planning process for 2009 and beyond will be begun in 2008.

Additionally, a five year pilot project for development of peer support services was begun in 2002 through a sole source contract with one of the four organizations discussed above. As a result, there are now several Peer Resource Centers existing in communities throughout the state. Expanding this excellent outcome is a goal of future efforts. A planning process for development of a sustainable structure for Consumer-Operated Services will be undertaken in 2008. Until then, the existing Peer Resource Centers will receive funding from the state through the Local Mental Health Authorities for their continued operation.

On a separate but related front, a workgroup associated with the Transformation Working Group is planning to develop methods and procedures for including the consumer voice in all mental health planning activities at the state and local levels. They have included the development of a peer certification process and a structure to develop and expand peer support services.

The short-term and long-term planning efforts will be consolidated into the following cohesive process:

- MHPAC will be used to solicit public input on how to spend resources for all innovative projects, including the creation of an infrastructure for expansion of Consumer Operated Services for the long-term
- The Consumer Voice workgroup of the Transformation Working Group currently includes plans to develop peer support services and certification processes
- The draft products and proposals developed by this work group will be discussed with MHPAC, who will in turn solicit public input into their development and finalization.
- Input collected by MHPAC will be used to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) that will be released in FY2008 for projects to be funded in FY2009. Certain aspects of planning may not be complete prior to the release date of an RFP.