

Direct Intervention: Vital Early Responsive Treatment System (DIVERTS)

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The DIVERTS initiative represents a partnership between the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the Kentucky National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and the Community Mental Health Centers to address the needs of those in crisis and with mental illness, substance use disorders and developmental delay. In particular, this initiative targeted the rising rate of adults being hospitalized in state psychiatric facilities by seeking to enhance community based services to include early intervention options to reduce the number of admissions and re-admissions in a given hospital region.

Two primary factors have impacted the growing number of individuals seeking hospital care. The loss of locally available private psychiatric inpatient services has increased the area's reliance on the state hospital, Western State Hospital, as a locus of care. Second, the growth in demand for more intensive community based services has outpaced the growth of human and financial resources available to community based service providers.

In order to facilitate the integration of hospital and community based services, the DIVERTS initiative was designed to promote community/hospital coordination. In addition to first admissions, the increase in 30 day readmissions rates was also be addressed.

The diversion of funding from the budget for Western State Hospital provided the opportunity for the hospital and community providers to build community capacity for the diversionary services that prevent hospitalization, with an emphasis on the adult crisis stabilization community based programs.

A region-wide telehealth network was established to use videoconferencing technology to link the partners in this project both inter and intra regionally. This system is the foundation upon which a "virtual treatment team" is formed between the community and the inpatient psychiatric facility staffs. This was the "universal" part of the project.

Four Rivers Behavioral Health accomplished establishment of a gate-keeping team to consult with mental health professionals conducting emergency assessments, review, and approve all referrals to Western State Hospital and the local private psychiatric hospital. Hospitalizations at the state facility were reduced by 49% from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 and have been maintained for the first 9 months of fiscal year 2008.