

Employee Stakeholder Input Report and Summary

In an effort to learn about HSC employee experience and ideas, all employees of the HSC who work in the mental health, AODA or developmental disabilities programs, as well as employees whose work indirectly supports those programs, were asked to complete a confidential survey. The employees responded to the following open-ended questions:

1. What do you see as the strengths of services provided by the HSC to persons with mental health/substance abuse issues and/or persons with developmental disabilities?
2. What suggestions do you have for improving HSC's ability to operate more effectively and better serve individuals with mental health/substance abuse issues and/or developmental disabilities?
3. Do you have specific suggestions for ways of saving money, improving efficiency or increasing revenues?
4. How well do you think the Tri-County System is working to meet the needs of Oneida, Vilas and Forest counties?

TMG distributed 66 surveys, and received 40 responses for a 61% return rate. Respondents identified the program or programs with which they work. The following table demonstrates the breakdown of responses by reported program area:

MH	AODA	DD	Support	Unidentified
8	9	9	10	4

The following comments represent a comprehensive summary of employee survey responses. Italicized entries indicate repeated responses.

1. Strengths of services provided by the Human Services Center

Staff attributes

- *Staff is caring and devoted to the people they serve.*
- *Staff is professional, well trained and qualified to do their jobs.*
- *Front-line staff promotes recovery.*
- *Staff is creative.*
- *Staff is able to continue providing services regardless of continued budget cuts.*
- *Support staff is helpful.*
- Staff has long-term relationships with consumers, families and providers.

General service characteristics

- *The services keep people in the community and out of hospitals and institutions.*
- *HSC provides services for people with or without insurance or the means to pay for services.*
- Services improve quality of life for consumers.
- Having HSC as a single point of entry for consumers seems to work well.
- HSC provides a variety of services to meet the needs of people in the area.
- HSC takes some burden off of the local criminal justice system.
- Staff within departments uses a team approach to providing individualized services.

Italicized entries indicate repeated responses.

- All three county boards have been generous in financing HSC fiscal shortfalls.
- The agency offers free training to contracted providers.

Specific service characteristics

- *Caring and competent psychiatrists who have stayed with the agency for several years.*
- *Psychiatrists work hard to visit with as many people as possible and to whittle down the waiting list.*
- *Northwoods Guidance Center operates in the black and is a good source of revenue for HSC.*
- *The treatment program at Koinonia is a much-needed service and is important to the process of recovery.*
- *AODA services have grown and can be offered to almost every age and at every level along the continuum of care.*
- *Koinonia staff has personal experience with and dedication to the recovery process.*
- *DD department is able to serve people with challenging behaviors in community settings, which saves money.*
- *CSP generates significant revenue.*

2. Suggestions for improving the Human Services Center's ability to operate effectively and better serve individuals

Service modifications and increases

- *Recruit more doctors and therapists.*
- *Increase the number of therapists at the NGC.*
- *Develop outreach to additional counties to provide services they need.*
- *Reduce waiting lists for services.*
- *Improve continuity of care for people who were involuntarily hospitalized and now need outpatient services.*
- *Develop halfway house services for people with AODA issues.*
- *Provide better monitoring and follow-up with people on Chapter 51 settlement agreements.*

Staffing recommendations

- *Develop or hire staff specifically for marketing, grant writing, and exploring different funding streams.*
- *Increase staffs' ability to flex schedules.*
- *Reduce staff turnover.*
- *Re-evaluate the need for all the mid- and upper management positions.*
- *Re-evaluate the need for staff within each department.*
- *Re-evaluate position descriptions.*
- *Evaluate the revenue earned for each position*
- *Add a half-time support staff position to the Mental Health Outreach program so case managers can spend more time with people.*
- *Add another CSP care manager position – preferably one with vocational rehabilitation experience.*

Italicized entries indicate repeated responses.

Organizational recommendations

General:

- *Develop a clear, consistent vision for the organization.*
- *Involve employees in discussions around the vision for the HSC.*
- *Improve communication with staff.*
- *Educate the board about the importance of HSC services and the populations served.*
- *Improve interdepartmental cooperation and teamwork*
- *Ensure employees are knowledgeable of all services HSC offers.*
- *Repair relationship between the HSC board and employees.*
- *Uphold professional ethics, rules and boundaries.*
- *Have a scheduling desk that makes appointments for all departments.*
- *Eliminate the need for staff to have to ask for commonly used items such as light bulbs, paperclips, etc.*
- *Increase community awareness and understanding of HSC services.*
- *Provide staff with easier access to medications.*
- *Share resources and ideas with other counties.*
- *Create change management process that will reduce employees' resistance to change.*
- *Integrate MH, AODA and DD services whenever possible.*
- *Resolve lingering personnel differences and move forward as a team.*
- *Increase caseload size to reflect current statewide trends.*
- *Ensure that staff receives the training needed to successfully do their jobs.*
- *Take consumer complaints seriously and follow-up as needed.*

Finances:

- *Pursue increased reimbursement rates for psychiatry from the state.*
- *Avoid over-use of legal services. Utilize legal counsel for appropriate purposes, such as interpreting statutes and regulations.*
- *Do not contract out for services that HSC is qualified and able to provide.*
- *Increase the amount of fiscal long- and short-term planning.*
- *Involve staff and managers in budget development.*

Information Technology:

- *Improve IT capabilities to ensure effective and timely communication within the agency, with consumers, and with community partners.*
- *Allow staff access to Internet services without having to go through a cumbersome and time-consuming process.*
- *Make the automated phone system easier for consumers to use.*

Management recommendations

- *Pursue new executive leadership*
- *Repair the agency's reputation and morale.*
- *Repair relations between the union and management.*
- *Repair relationships between management and staff and change the "us vs. them" frame of mind.*

Italicized entries indicate repeated responses.

- *Ensure that management has the necessary education, experience and understanding to effectively lead programs.*
- *Enable managers to make decisions without having to clear everything with the Executive Director.*
- *Improve management skills and techniques to ensure staff are respected and treated fairly.*
- *Seek input from staff.*
- *Hold all staff meetings.*
- *Provide better supervision and direction for new employees at HSC so they become competent faster.*
- *Ameliorate the perception that management is in over their heads.*
- *Encourage management to look at process improvement.*
- *Enforce policies and deliver reprimands consistently and fairly.*

3. Suggestions for saving money, improving efficiency and increasing revenues

Service modifications or increases

- *Develop and implement CCS.*
- *Develop several levels of supervised placement options for mental health and AODA consumers.*
- *Expand the CSP program.*
- *Maximize time providing direct service by utilizing support staff to perform tasks that do not require social worker credentials.*
- *Schedule home visits in a way that maximizes time and travel efficiencies.*
- *Car pool for home visits when feasible.*
- *Contract with therapists and psychiatrists for flat fees instead of hourly billing*
- *Have therapists determine whether a person needs to be seen by a psychiatrist instead of sending all of the new evaluation consumers directly to the psychiatrist.*
- *Combine Mental Health and AODA departments into a Behavioral Health department to avoid duplication of tasks and better streamline services.*
- *Develop a Chapter 55 receiving facility for people with dementia who exhibit behavioral emergencies.*
- *Contract with other counties to provide them the services they need.*
- *Continue to utilize the sample drug program.*

Staffing recommendations

- *Evaluate staff workloads to determine whether all positions are needed and whether work is evenly distributed.*
- *Hire someone to research and write grant and market the organization.*
- *Hire staff with the education and credentials necessary to bill Medicaid, Medicare or private insurance.*
- *Develop staff positions that provide in-home support to help maintain consumers in community settings.*
- *Add a half-time support position for the Mental Health Outreach program.*

- *Hire additional therapists in order to capture additional billing opportunities*

Italicized entries indicate repeated responses.

- Consider combining all part-time psychiatric service contracts into one full-time staff position.

Organizational recommendations

- *Create provider productivity standards and a process for monitoring productivity.*
- *Adopt a business strategy that promotes a change management process, invests in and retains employees, and fosters effective management.*
- *Replace the inadequate and outdated IT and billing system.*
- *Reduce the amount of money spent on legal fees by training management on the appropriate methods of handling personnel issues and involving new and less senior staff in the unions*
- *Determine whether providing services in-house or contracting out for services is more efficient and effective.*
- *Make claims processing more efficient.*
- *Need better email system.*
- *Improve union, which is dysfunctional and controlled by a small group of long-time employees.*
- Evaluate whether the Mental Health Outreach program is maximizing billing opportunities.
- Improve marketing of the HSC to the community.
- Serve consumers with insurance.
- Operate as a business.
- Improve communications within the agency to reduce the amount of duplicated work, and time spent chasing information.
- Remove union representation from the organization.
- Research the impact Family Care would have on the agency and whether it makes more financial sense.
- Contract out the emergency services program, if feasible.
- Establish an accurate and realistic Mental Health Department budget that accounts for high-cost placements at Mendota and Winnebago.

Management recommendations

- *Replace the Executive Director and program supervisors with individuals who have formal management training and experience.*
- *Employ managers who will treat staff better.*
- Seek staff input in the budget process.
- Evaluate the need for all management positions.
- Provide supervisory training and education on financial and budget issues.

4. Effectiveness of the Tri-County system in meeting the needs of Oneida, Vilas and Forest counties

Service observations

- *Large mental health caseloads and waiting lists limit the amount of services that can be provided to individuals.*
- *AODA Department is serving people well and removing barriers to treatment and aftercare*
- *Waiting lists for psychiatric services are very long so people are not able to receive prompt, needed services.*

Italicized entries indicate repeated responses.

- The people will be best served if there are qualified service providers available in all three counties.
- In relation to CSP, Oneida County fares better than Vilas or Forest because the case managers are based in Oneida and are available to provide more hands-on care (med drops, etc.).
- In relation to the NGC, losing therapist positions has made it more difficult to provide therapy services to consumers living in Forest and Vilas counties.
- Transportation to access services has been an issue for people who live in more remote areas.
- HSC saves each individual county significant money by removing the need to create an AODA department in each county.
- Waiting lists for NGC services are very long.

Management observations

- *Executive leadership does not communicate well with the board, and the board does not ask a lot of questions, therefore the system does not function well.*
- Executive Director is not managing the organization well, which impacts the number of consumers who can receive services and the level of service people receive.

General observations

- *Needs are met effectively.*
- *Needs are somewhat met given available resources.*
- *Forest and Vilas counties do not receive the same number or level of services as Oneida.*
- *All counties are equally served when it comes to inpatient/residential services, but Oneida County receives more community-based services.*
- *There are no ratios to determine how many people should be served from each county, so it's first come first served. Could review and readjust those ratios periodically.*
- *The lack of communication and information sharing makes it difficult to focus improvements.*
- Must continue to provide crucial services to parts of the region that are underserved.
- Forest and Vilas counties do not demonstrate much interest in the services HSC provides.
- Not enough professionally trained staff at HSC.
- HSC has potential for growth.
- Operating a tri-county system is more efficient due to the reduction in administrative costs and service duplication.
- Local tribes are not served well in tri-county system.

Summary of Key Findings from Employee Stakeholder Input

While this list is not exhaustive, the following comments and recommendations were more common and can be viewed as re-occurring themes that highlight strengths, concerns and suggestions identified from the survey results.

- Strengths
 - Staff is caring, professional, creative and helpful.
 - Psychiatrists work hard and are caring and competent.
 - Services keep people in the community.
 - Services are provided regardless of ability to pay.

Italicized entries indicate repeated responses.

- NGC is a good source of revenue fro HSC.
- Koinonia is a needed service.
- AODA services have grown and diversified.

- Service Recommendations
 - Provide outreach to other counties.
 - Address large mental health caseloads and waiting lists.

- Staffing and Personnel Management Recommendations
 - Increase the number of psychiatrists and therapists.
 - Reduce staff turnover.
 - Increase flexible work schedules.

- Revenue Maximization and Cost Saving Recommendations
 - Evaluate staff workloads.
 - Monitor productivity.
 - Develop or hire staff for grant writing and marketing.
 - Develop and implement CCS.
 - Expand CSP.
 - Develop more levels of supervised placement for mental health and AODA.
 - Greater efficiency in home visits (scheduling of visits, carpooling).
 - More in-house handling of personnel issues and less reliance on outside legal counsel.
 - Determine whether direct provision or contracting of services is more efficient and effective.
 - Maximize time of direct service staff by using support staff to perform some tasks.
 - Make claims processing more efficient.

- Management and Organizational Recommendations
 - Develop clear and consistent vision for organization.
 - Seek input from staff; involve employees in decisions.
 - Improve communications with staff.
 - Adopt business strategy that promotes a change management process, invests in and retains employees, and fosters effective management.
 - Educate board and employees about HSC.
 - Improve interdepartmental cooperation and teamwork.
 - Pursue new executive leadership.
 - Replace Executive Director and program supervisors with individuals who have formal management training.
 - Ensure management has necessary skills to lead and uses techniques that treat staff fairly.
 - Enable managers to make decisions without clearance by Executive Director.
 - Repair agency reputation and morale.
 - Repair relations between management and staff, and management and the union.
 - Improve union that is dysfunctional and controlled by a small group of long-time employees.

Italicized entries indicate repeated responses.

- Technology Recommendations
 - Improve IT capabilities to ensure effective and timely internal and external communication.
 - Replace inadequate and outdated IT and billing system.
 - Need better email system.

Italicized entries indicate repeated responses.