

**Access to care and crisis safety net services for consumers with developmental disabilities and mental illness jeopardized by budget reductions.**

Wake County Human Services (WCHS) has a team of nine staff who provide a set of outpatient services known as “DD Bridging” services. The team’s mission is to help consumers and families *access* services, to assist consumers in gaining *stability* just after the occurrence of a crisis event and to *prevent* recurrence of crisis that would likely result in more expensive and intrusive interventions. These services are only provided to consumers for whom no other resources are available, either due to provider network capacity or capability issues, and only for the amount of time needed to gain access to ongoing services. The team serves both children and adults whose primary disability is categorized as developmentally disabled.

The DD Bridging Team provides the following services.

- ❑ Personal Inventory Screenings. Consumers seeking care for the first time in Wake County are referred to a DD Specialist on this team. The Specialist visits the family, reviews the history, and returns recommendations to the LME who determines eligibility for services. 30 – 35 new consumers per month receive this service.
- ❑ Crisis Case Management. When neither the LME nor the individual has the financial resources to access services during a crisis this team steps in to work with the consumer and family, serving as a liaison and linking them to resources and supports to meet their needs until a more permanent solution is available. These consumers are served until financial benefits eligibility (Medicaid) can be established or for no longer than 6 months to connect the consumer to other supports. 12 – 15 consumers per month are receiving these bridge services.
- ❑ Consumers who are dually diagnosed with a developmental disability and a mental illness often get a variety of services through the community network but comprehensive psychiatric services, including medication management, is difficult to obtain. This team’s psychiatrist and RN fill that gap for a caseload of about 75 individuals.

This DD Bridging Team is the only WCHS Behavioral Health staff dedicated to working with persons with developmental disabilities, and the only program that receives County revenues supporting this population. All other DD services in Wake County are funded through Medicaid, State IPRS, or private funding. The cost represents *less than 5%* of the County’s total contribution to Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services.

Flexible county funding has allowed the team to provide assertive outreach and crisis case management in settings limited by other funding sources. For instance, this allows staff to go into the jails to assist with discharge planning and/or disability specific intervention and prevent rapid destabilization for the consumer upon re-entry.

The funding is at risk due to the County’s budget crisis and this team will be gone on July 1, 2010 without advocacy to educate County officials about the significant loss this will be to consumers.

**Ask your County officials to prioritize this team’s work as they consider the difficult funding decisions that must be made.**

A list of contact names, email addresses and numbers are on the reverse side.

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