WASHINGTON COMBATING AUTISM ADVISORY COUNCIL
Community Asset Mapping Project

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the University of Washington's Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities and Related Disorders (LEND) Program* is collaborating on a Community Asset Mapping project with several counties across the State.

In early-2010, DOH and LEND began working with two pilot counties to evaluate each community's current method of screening, assessment, and referral to services and resources for children with suspected developmental delays, like autism. Seven total counties have been chosen to participate in this project which will continue through August 31, 2011.

Project goal

Develop a coordinated team approach within the community to ensure children with suspected developmental delays, like autism, get appropriate resources and services in an efficient and timely manner.

What we will do

DOH and LEND will lead a half day meeting with families, support organizations, and education, behavior, and medical professionals within the community to:

1. Define the community's current process of screening, assessment and referral to services and resources.

2. Determine what works well and what could be improved.

3. Establish a plan to:

   a. Address issues with the current process.

   b. Identify trainings or technical support that will increase knowledge and skills to improve the process.

   c. Revisit, evaluate, and help revise the plan.

Desired outcome

- Community understands the importance of all children getting early screening for developmental delays.

- More people can do early screenings.

- More people can refer for early intervention services.

- Community knows best place to send families for diagnosis.

- Families and service providers know where to go for resources and services.

Starting Out

The Project Leadership Team identified criteria for selecting pilot communities, including diversity - both geographically and culturally - and their commitment to the process. Goals and desired outcomes were developed as well as how best to use the "Tiers to Diagnosis" Pyramid developed at the 2009 Multi-Disciplinary Team Summit.

An identified community liaison invited key community stakeholders to participate in a half day meeting. This included the medical community and other service providers, Birth to 3, Head Start/ECEAP, local health departments, public schools, family support organizations, and family members. In mid-February of 2010, the team presented the Community Asset Project to the first two counties - Lewis and Walla Walla.

Pilots Identify Common Needs

- Community "road map" for parents and providers to increase awareness of resources within the community and navigation along the Pyramid.
- Coordinated systems for communication between all providers and families within the community to support navigating the Pyramid.
- Increased child care provider awareness of developmental milestones and training in how to talk with parents if they suspect a developmental delay.
- Coordinated communication among community providers and the out-of-community diagnostic team.

Pilot Counties' Progress

Walla Walla County

This team holds monthly meetings through their medical home leadership network and is working on a local algorithm for use in the community. County team leaders visited the diagnostic team at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital and are very encouraged to continue networking with diagnostic centers across the state. They held two trainings for 85 community providers on the use of the MCHAT and how to talk to families about a suspected delay. An informal talk about autism with Dr. Glenn Tripp from Mary Bridge is planned for October for medical providers and families.

Lewis County

This team secured funding to support a professional facilitator to help conduct monthly meetings. They are developing a clearly articulated algorithm that can be adapted for all Lewis County providers and used in health care settings, child care settings, early intervention, and with families. Lewis County is also exploring ways to connect with other sites throughout Washington to share resources and information, including training opportunities.

Lessons Learned

- Communities like the Tiers to Diagnosis Pyramid and find it a helpful organizing tool.
- Communities are hungry for the opportunity to have facilitated dialogues about coordinating autism services and resources. They appreciate the assistance of a technical assistance team which motivates forward action within the community.
- Communities want ongoing communication with the technical assistance team and collaboration with the Combating Autism Advisory Council.
- For communities to be successful in carrying out next steps, they desire to build a community-based infrastructure with dedicated financial resources.
- Including family members' participation in community discussions and next steps is vital.
- Communities want to discuss how to build skill and capacity in providing evidence-based intervention services.

Every child and family has the right to a timely assessment, a professional diagnosis, and evidence-based services in their community. As the Community Asset Mapping Project continues to spread across Washington, we move closer to meeting this need in every community.

Community Asset Mapping Communities

Blue – Pilot Communities
Orange – Additional Sites
***** - Medical Homes

Pend Oreille

Spokane

Whitman

Asotin

Stevens

Garfield

Ferry

Lincoln

Adams

Columbia

Walla Walla *

Okanogan

Douglas

Grant

Franklin

Benton

Tri-Cities *

Chelan

Kittitas

Yakima *

Klickitat

Whatcom *

Skagit

Snohomish

King

Pierce

Skamania

San Juan

Island

Kitsap

Mason

Madigan

Thurston

Lewis *

Cowlitz

Clark

Clallam

Jefferson

Grays Harbor

Pacific

Wahkiakum