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Report: Consumers are satisfied with new system and services

For the Headlight
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Article Launched: 12/08/2006 12:00:00 AM MST

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SANTA FE — The New Mexico Behavioral Health Collaborative has just completed the 2006 Consumer Satisfaction Survey for children/families and adults who have accessed New Mexico's public mental health and substance abuse services during the first year of the new behavioral health system of care.

And the results for both groups are the highest of any survey during the years they were administered.

"For consumers' level of satisfaction to be high during a transition to streamline and improve behavioral health services says a lot," said Secretary Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department and co-chair of the Collaborative. "This does not mean, however, that our job is done."

The random sample telephone survey of approximately 1,400 children/families and adults, was conducted during the first year of the new behavioral health system of care, which began July 1, 2005. At that time, a significant amount of publicly funded behavioral health services, both mental health and substance abuse, was administered through a single statewide entity, ValueOptions New Mexico.

Those surveyed respondents were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction in five areas: Access, Appropriateness, Satisfaction, Effectiveness and Empowerment. High levels of satisfaction were reported in all areas.

The top three positive responses from the children/families survey are:

1. Staff was sensitive to our cultural-ethnic background,
2. Staff respected our wishes about who is, and who is not, to be given information about my child's or family's treatment, and
3. My family and I were treated with respect and dignity by all of the provider's staff.

The top three positive responses from adult survey:

1. Staff respected my rights,
2. The services I received were helpful, and
3. I felt comfortable asking questions about my treatment and medications.

This first-time survey will now serve as a baseline for maintaining and improving satisfaction among New Mexico's behavioral health consumers.

The survey did reveal some areas in need of improvement. For example, only 42 percent of children/families and over 50 percent of adults did not know whether consumers are involved in decisions about the quality of care they received.