



*Bridging Local Systems:  
Strategies for Behavioral Health  
and Social Services Collaboration*

## SUMMARY: REGIONAL LEADERSHIP SUMMITS

Participants at the Regional Leadership Summits thus far in the Eastpointe, Partners Behavioral Health Management, Sandhills Center, and Alliance Behavioral Healthcare catchment areas have raised concerns and proposed strategies along the following common themes:

- Collaboration & Communication
  - Establish a communication protocol and distribute contact information.
  - Eastpointe Regional DSS participants are developing a proposal to create LME/MCO Liaison positions at the DSS to facilitate communication and service coordination. Similarly, Sandhills Regional Leadership Summit participants have drafted a proposal for a Mental Health Case Manager at the DSS to evaluate needed services, facilitate referrals, and provide direct diagnostic/treatment services to children and families. Durham County DSS and Alliance already have a co-funded position.
  - Eastpointe Regional Leadership Summit participants identified a specific need for increased collaboration around discharge planning and are discussing communication and procedural strategies for future planning.
  - Partners Regional Leadership Summit participants identified Transition to Community Living Initiative (TCLI) services as a key area for increased collaboration. TCLI staff and DSS adult service managers are developing a process for working together to identify and assist transition clients.
- Education & Training
  - In order to enhance understanding among DSS, LME/MCO, and provider staff of the responsibilities and regulations of each partner and help prevent future breakdowns in communication, the participants of the Eastpointe Regional Leadership Summit have proposed developing a series of cross-training orientation webinars to educate staff on a number of common issues relating to procedure, provider management, and inter-agency communication.
  - Partners staff gave an informational presentation on the adult services available and participants of the Partners Regional Leadership Summit identified possible training topics.
  - Participants at the Partners and Sandhills Regional Leadership Summits requested additional information about how funding streams work for each agency.

- Provider Network & Service Delivery
  - Some regions emphasized the limited resources available and a lack of providers/services in some counties. This was of particular concern to counties in the Eastpointe region. Several counties across regions discussed the benefits of having or desire to have an onsite clinicians.
  - Participating counties at both the Eastpointe and Sandhills Regional Leadership Summits expressed concerns regarding the timeliness of service delivery. Some participants from both DSS agencies and LME/MCOs shared strategies for incentivizing timely assessments and referrals in payment contracts.
  - Participants at both the Eastpointe and Alliance Regional Leadership Summits raised questions about how provider performance is monitored and concerns about the quality of providers and their contribution to placement disruptions. Sandhills Regional Leadership Summit participants proposed a set of performance-based measures for use in contracting with network providers and a biannual meeting between the Sandhills Stakeholder Continual Quality Improvement committee and DSS agencies.
  - Although the DSS and LME/MCO systems have different approaches to evaluating placements, both can agree that placement disruptions have a human cost for the child and a financial cost for both systems. Alliance Regional Leadership Summit participants have made building capacity, placing children locally, and preventing placement disruptions a focus issue of discussions. This ongoing conversation has centered around the foster care home shortage, difficulties placing children in their home counties (and the importance of doing so), and concerns about network quality as it relates to placement moves.
- Parent Services & Eligibility
  - DSS representatives at the Partners, Eastpointe, and Sandhills Regional Leadership Summits raised the issue of eligibility of parents for Medicaid services. Adult services, including opiate addiction treatment services, can be a valuable tool for family reunification, but are particularly difficult to access for parents without Medicaid, or parents who lose Medicaid after children are removed from the home.
    - Participants suggested a Medicaid waiver to allow for a period of 12 months of Medicaid eligibility for parents who lose custody of their children.
    - Sandhills Center and local DSS have agreed that parents entering the health department without Medicaid can receive intervention therapy for 6 weeks.
- Adult Services
  - Participants at the Partners, Eastpointe, and Alliance Regional Leadership Summits have raised concern about the impact of the growing adult population and the need to grow capacity and collaboration to meet the challenge.

- Trauma-Informed Care Practices
  - Partners Regional Leadership Summit participants expressed a desire to implement trauma-informed services more broadly in the region. Cleveland and Catawba Counties have implemented trauma-informed care interventions and additional counties, including Lincoln and Gaston expressed interest in pursuing opportunities to implement trauma-informed care elements as well. Participants noted that these are ambitious initiatives that require engagement and commitment by both partners in addition to funding.
- Data
  - Partners Regional Leadership Summit participants discussed the importance of data-informed action and are working to collect common data elements among counties implementing trauma-informed care services and share data between the LME/MCO and DSS.
  - Alliance Regional Leadership Summit participants shared and discussed data from several sources and how it can be used to inform action and evaluate progress in efforts to build capacity, place children locally, and prevent placement disruptions.