

Frederick County is a growing county, growing by 45,069 people between 1990 and 2000. The average annual increase in population is projected to be 4,331 people, or an increase of 86,623 by 2020, to a population of 281,900. This growth presents a challenge to the County to increase its services such as education, health care, mental health and substance abuse treatment to meet the needs of the increasing population. The Frederick County Substance Abuse Council (FCSAC) is committed to a leadership role to decrease Frederick County's substance abuse problem, though the number of people increases.

The plan of the Council to decrease substance abuse in Frederick County involves providing an adequate continuum of prevention and treatment services to all residents, including all special populations, and including innovative programs proven to be effective, such as Drug Court. The first objective is to create and complete a needs assessment to determine the gaps in services. Though presently all levels of outpatient services are offered, are there enough treatment slots? Are there adequate inpatient slots in Frederick and neighboring counties to treat Frederick County residents? What are the gaps in prevention services? Do adequate services exist for populations including, but not limited to children of addicts, and dual diagnosed individuals? Are co-existing medical conditions, such as Hepatitis C and HIV consistently being identified and treated? The Council will prioritize the information gathered from the needs assessment, and develop an action plan to fill in the existing gaps.

In addition to a continuum of care, the Council recognizes the importance of a seamless flow of care for the clients to enhance their remaining in treatment as they move from one level of care to the next. For this seamless flow to exist, treatment providers need to know who is providing what services to whom, and equally important the providers need to know one another.

The objective is to create a written "pathway protocol" for both adolescent and adult services, and to conduct workshops to familiarize agencies with who provides what services and how to best facilitate referrals and transfers. A consortium of public and private providers will meet periodically.

The Council hopes to increase public awareness of substance abuse issues. Greater public awareness may mean more prevention efforts, and earlier interventions for individuals and families with substance abuse problems. The idea is to reduce substance abuse by eliminating its appeal, as well as having people in need of treatment, access services as quickly as possible.

The plan is to use a "message mapping" approach to conduct a media campaign, targeting special groups as well as the general population. Funding is a big object to utilizing media, so these efforts will be tied to fund raising efforts, as well as creating campaign possibilities not requiring money.

Even before performing a needs assessment, one gap consistently identified by Council members is housing for substance abuse outpatient clients without a stable or

chemical free living environment, or for clients transitioning from Detention Center Treatment Programs or Inpatient Programs to outpatient treatment without appropriate housing. The goal of establishing safe haven housing for clients is a major undertaking, so that a task force including many community individuals and interest groups will be established. Ideally this will become a community-based initiative.

Finally, Frederick County's strategic plan includes decreasing barriers to affordable treatment. The strategy is to explore the possibilities of using citation dollars and fundraising efforts, while addressing the harder legislative and insurance issues.

Many of the goals and objectives in the Frederick County strategic plan overlap, and are natural outgrowths of each other. The plan will remain fluid and may be changed as new information and awareness surfaces from the work of the Council's committees addressing each goal and objective.