

# 2009 Human Services Budget

## Mental Health And Mental Retardation

**F**orty-eight county mental health and mental retardation programs (MH/MR), some through a joinder arrangement that includes two or more counties, serve Pennsylvania's 67 counties. MH/MR programs at the county level are managed together with the assistance of an advisory board appointed by the commissioners. Most counties offer services through a series of contracts with local providers, while others provide some services using county staff.

**Mental Retardation:** Counties are mandated to provide community mental retardation services to children and adults with mental retardation, as well as, their families, including early intervention services for children ages one to three, and residential and vocational programs designed to help individuals with mental retardation live in and contribute to their communities. Individual and family support services such as respite care, in-home therapy, transportation and homemaker services are also available.

Pennsylvania's public mental retardation system is in a period of rapid and radical change that is extremely challenging for county programs as well as for the Department of Public Welfare (DPW). Because of federal requirements, the state is now required to contract with counties through an Administrative Entity Agreement to establish specific policies that are to be applied consistently in all counties for all services provided using Medicaid funds. This is approximately 80 percent of the funding.

**Mental Health:** Community mental health mandated and entitlement services are supervised by the state and administered by county programs.

Counties are required to provide a wide range of community-based services including short-term inpatient, outpatient and partial hospital care, emergency "crisis intervention" services, counseling, information, family support services, family-based mental health services, in-home and in-school intensive supports, services for children and adolescents and several levels of case management.

In 2007, DPW expanded its Behavioral HealthChoices mandatory managed care program for Medicaid recipients to all Pennsylvania counties. Many counties have contracted with the state to manage this program, but most rural counties are served by a single state contract with a managed care organization, with support from county programs.

DPW is in the process of closing the Mayview State Hospital in Allegheny County. As a result, several counties will have the opportunity to expand their community-based services.

**For more information on community mental health and mental retardation services, contact Michael Chambers at (717) 232-7554 x 3120, or [mchamber@pacounties.org](mailto:mchamber@pacounties.org).**



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