The NEVADA YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORTS Study Overview and Frequently Asked Questions October 2007

What is the "Youth and Family Supports Study"?
The *Youth and Family Supports Study* is being conducted by the University of Washington and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, with the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS). The study measures the long-term outcomes for youth with serious emotional and behavioral challenges who are involved in the child welfare system in Clark County, Nevada. The project is funded by the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) and will take place from 2007 – 2009.

What is the purpose of the study?

The main purpose of the *Youth and Family Supports Study* is to determine what services are associated with the best health, school, and well-being outcomes for these youth and their families. A major research question is to determine which intensive care management option available in Nevada works best, including case management as administered by Mojave Mental Health and the "wraparound process" as delivered by DCFS. The study will also assess what other services are associated with better outcomes. Finally, the study will shed light on the relative costs and benefits of different service options.

Why is this Study Important?

There are several reasons the *Youth and Family Supports Study* was prioritized by the state of Nevada and funded by NIMH. First, there have been few good studies on the impact of wraparound and case management on the lives of children and families. Second, Nevada has invested heavily in the use of wraparound. It would be important to document whether this investment is worthwhile. Finally, the study will let us assess the level of quality of services provided to these youth in a rigorous way. Data collected through the study can be used to help improve services and "make the case" for resources from the State and other sources.

What are the methods for the study?

From July 2007 through December 2008, the Outcomes of Wraparound in Nevada study will enroll 150 children and adolescents who meet criteria for severe emotional disturbance (SED), are Medicaid-eligible, and are referred for intensive services by, for example, DFS case workers, the youth's family, the Child Haven Assessment Team, juvenile justice, school or other agency representatives. For those youth who are eligible for the study, and whose legal guardian and parent both consent for the youth to be in the study, 50% of the youth will be randomly assigned to wraparound and 50% will be assigned to intensive case management. Parents and caregivers of youth will be interviewed at entry to the study and 6 and 12 months thereafter. Youth will be interviewed at 6 and 12 months. Providers will be interviewed at 6 months. Caregivers/parents and youth will receive gift cards of $20 - $40 for their time.

What are the outcomes being assessed?

Interview, record review, and administrative data from the juvenile justice, child welfare, and school systems will be collected on the young person's behavior, functioning, residential outcomes, and school and juvenile justice outcomes such as school attendance and arrests. Data will also be collected on shorter-term outcomes such as types of services and supports

received and engagement in services. Finally, data on satisfaction of parents and caregivers, quality of wraparound and case management, and quality of other services will be collected.

How will the results be used?

Data collected from youth, families, case managers, and wraparound coordinators will be confidential. Data will never be tied to an individual in any reports. Identifying information on youth, families, and providers are kept separate from the data actually collected. The results will be analyzed midway through the study and at the end of the study. Researchers are working with an advisory team of local stakeholders to identify and answer key questions of interest to those in Clark County and Nevada. In addition, the data will be used to answer questions about outcomes for different types of youths, types of services received, quality of services, and so forth. Because so few such studies have been done to date, such information will be critical to the field of children's services nationally and internationally.

What are the possible risks and benefits?

Study participants (youth, caregivers, families, and providers) will have an opportunity to provide information that will be used to improve services, advocate for better care, and obtain more resources. Risks include stress of being involved in interviews that ask sensitive questions and possible (but unlikely) breaches of confidentiality. There is the possibility that a youth may be assigned to a service type that is not the best fit for the youth. However, if outcomes are found to be better for one study condition, the study will be altered to respond to this finding. Also, if necessary, a youth can be switched to a different condition after beginning the study.

What are the main differences between wraparound and case management?

Both wraparound and intensive case management are care management models intended to ensure that youths with challenging mental health issues receive services that are coordinated and that will result in positive outcomes. In this way, both models are different from child welfare case work, in terms of their focus and intensity. With respect to the differences between case management and wraparound, both models are intensive, but there are differences in the specific activities. For example, wraparound emphasizes creation of a team and development of community and natural supports. Case management emphasizes "brokering" of services and less emphasis on natural supports and family and youth voice and choice. Case loads are also somewhat higher in the intensive case management program.

What does this study require of me?

The study requires different things of different people. Legal guardians and/or biological parents must consent for the youth to be included in the study, and older youth must assent to being included. Thus, case workers (for children who are in custody) must be engaged quickly after a youth is identified for the study, so consent can be given and the youth referred to the appropriate service type. Study personnel will attempt to reach biological parents whose youth are in custody to gain approval for youth study participation.

Caregivers of youth enrolled in the study will be interviewed three times and youth twice. Providers (case managers, wraparound facilitators) will participate in a 45-60 minute interview once during the study period for each study youth. Other individuals may also be involved. For example, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) will be informed if a youth for whom they advocate is referred to the study.

Who can I contact for more information?

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