

DANE COUNTY 2018 AAA BUDGET PRIORITIES– FINAL

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES – Request contracting for a program similar to the Mobile Outreach for Seniors Team (MOST) program, which provided mental health treatment services and case management support to Medicaid older adults to improve their physical and mental health, thereby, enabling these seniors to continue living in their own homes. Dane County contracted with MOST for \$372,338 in 2015 of which \$51,492 had to be earned in Medicaid reimbursements. The MOST Program contract stipulated that 170 clients would receive prescriber services and 160 clients would receive case management services.

History: Mental health crosses all gender, racial, social-economic, and urban/rural indicators. The incidence of mental health issues among Dane County senior adults has increased dramatically in recent years. This increase can be attributed, in part, to the rapidly growing number of Baby Boomer seniors. In addition, the cultural norms of the Baby Boomer and Greatest Generation contribute to their reluctance to seek early diagnosis and/or treatment of mental health issues. As a result, Focal Point case managers have had to address more complicated mental health cases while receiving diminishing resources.

Justification: Focal Point case managers are challenged with serving senior adults whose mental health behaviors threaten their health, living situation, food security, and safety, yet these seniors may not have a mental health diagnosis or receive treatment. Without appropriate resources, Focal Point case managers are constantly required to react to the client's behavior rather than address proactive treatment. To effectively help senior adults with chronic mental health issues who do not qualify for Medicaid, Focal Point case managers need a program to refer these clients. A program like MOST is needed to conduct diagnostic assessments, determine treatment options, monitor medications, coordinate medications with the client's pharmacist, conduct short-term in-home therapy, provide support for families struggling with the client's mental health behaviors, advocate for appropriate and equitable client services, arrange for transportation to the doctor and see a physician for diagnosis. Even clients with mental health insurance coverage currently experience long waiting list times before a therapist is available. The MOST Program provided mental health support to seniors who were at Focal Points in rural areas, and helped prevent crises and the high costs associated with emergency care at Mendota and Winnebago.

Outcomes: Senior adults who experience symptoms of chronic mental illness that interfere with their functioning and/or ability to continue living independently will receive comprehensive, individualized mental health services, which is currently not available. This program will help these seniors function well enough to continue living independently, thus saving the high cost of emergency care. In addition, Focal Point case managers will have time to support more seniors in Dane County. It is estimated over 205 senior adults need this program in 2017.

NOTE: This priority increase was not funded; County Exec's office is considering forming a County Task Force to review this need.

Email from Lynn Green, Director, Dane County Dept. of Human Services, 5/10/18

I did speak with the County Executive about this. As you may or may not know, the County is in the process of selecting a vendor to study the Dane County Mental Health System – private and public. The County Executive rightfully feels that services to seniors should be part of this study, and it would not be appropriate to establish a separate task force at this time. We will be sure that this is include in the parameters of the upcoming study.

I am copying Jeff Kostelic to edit, add to, or comment if my recollection of how the County Executive intends to proceed is inaccurate.