

Youth in Transition (YIT) Article for DMH Monthly Newsletter, April, 2011

We want to share the formal results of two federal site visits. A). One site visit was to the Lamoille region, which is Vermont's YIT representative for the MACRO, Inc. national evaluation's bi-annual assessment of use of system of care principles. B). The other was the Year 2 compliance site visit by the federal Project Officer with a team of experts about the SAMHSA Children's Mental Health Initiative (CMHI), the source of funds for the YIT Grant. Short descriptions of both of these visits are presented below.

A). *Federal evaluation site visit to Lamoille:* In August 2010, a team of federal evaluators visited the Lamoille Valley Youth in Transition Project for three days. They interviewed grant staff, young adult clients, families of young adults, community partners and reviewed case files to create a report detailing program strengths and recommended areas for improvement.

The report identified a number of program strengths. The evaluators noted that services are family-friendly, provided at convenient times, and are free. Connection to services also happens quickly. Further, youth feel respected and heard during enrollment and are actively involved in the service planning process, treatment planning and service provision. The report also identified several areas for improvement that have already been resolved by the project team. The federal evaluators will be visiting the Lamoille Valley to do updated assessments every 18 months, and the project will continue to benefit from outside perspectives.

B). *Year 2 federal compliance site visit:* The federal project officers for the CMHI 6-year grants typically make site visits in Years 2 and 4. Following Vermont's 2 year site visit for YIT in October, 2010, Federal Project Officer Bethanie Parrish and Gary Blau, Chief of the SAMHSA Division of Mental Health's Child, Adolescent and Family Branch, sent a written report concluding that:

"The Vermont Youth in Transition system of care has a solid foundation in place to build upon and has accomplished a great deal during the first two years of the cooperative agreement. Vermont appears to be on track for developing another successful system of care....At this time many things are going well and primary among them are system of care structures that have developed over the past 30 years....All these strengths indicate that Vermont is poised to fully implement and sustain the cooperative agreement; we look forward to your continued success."

Recommendations were made in several areas, mainly to continue – as the work progresses - to increase the:

- participation of young adults (especially), their families and allies in planning and developing, monitoring and modifying the system of care;
- Learning and sharing opportunities for regional YIT staff; and
- Resources to enhance cultural and linguistic competency efforts.

Beyond this, the federal TA Partnership – represented on the site visit team – subsequently selected Vermont as a stellar example for other CMHI grantees about how to build clinical services and supports and do sustainability planning. This means that the Department of Mental Health will be listed as a resource for others throughout the country to contact about best practices in these areas.