

Summary of 2017-18 Governance Study
DBHDS Oversight Authority and Responsibility

September 28, 2017

The SJ 47 study focuses on improving and expanding publicly funded mental health services, with particular emphasis on services delivered by CSBs. In the upcoming phase of the SJ 47 inquiry, the System Structure and Financing Panel will focus on governance of the system at the state and local level. While several state agencies have responsibilities for overseeing, supporting and/or regulating community mental health services, this portion of the study will examine the responsibility and authority of DBHDS to provide oversight of CSBs.

Currently, major system transformation initiatives are already underway including STEP-VA, financial realignment of state hospitals and CSBs, and DBHDS integration and coordination with DMAS. In addition, the SPQM¹ data management platform is being studied to support quality improvement and management of the transformed system.

These initiatives will require that DBHDS (1) adopt performance criteria and measures that reflect outcomes of services for individuals and families, costs of care, hospital utilization, and other important considerations; (2) intensify its data collection, reporting and monitoring; and (3) provide more active oversight, support and management of the system of care.

The transformed system raises important questions about the Department's oversight authority and its capacity to carry out essential oversight and quality improvement functions. The Panel will explore what changes may be needed, including additional resources or statutory authority. Specific issues of interest to be considered include:

- Current methods for DBHDS monitoring and oversight of system-level and CSB outcomes and performance;
- DBHDS roles and responsibilities in a transformed system of care focusing on data-driven oversight and quality management;
- What are, and what should be, the limits of DBHDS oversight authority?
- How will DBHDS manage quality improvement in the transformed system? What interventions would be allowable or desirable under what circumstances (e.g., to address "outlier" CSBs, high state hospital usage, inability to spend state allocations, etc.)?
- Whether DBHDS oversight might be adjusted in relation to the strength of local (or regional) oversight and governance;
- Infrastructure needs for effective oversight of the transformed system (e.g., organization and staffing, data infrastructure, policy support, statutory authority, etc.);

The study will utilize data from structured interviews with stakeholders including DBHDS, CSBs, and VACSB; consultation with outside experts; document reviews; and other data sources such as the already completed CSB Executive Director survey.

¹ SPQM = Service Process Quality Management