

Redesigning the Full Service Partnership Program

Improving Outpatient Mental Health Care

The Challenge

The Full Service Partnership (FSP) program is the signature program of the 2004 Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and a foundational program for an effective community based mental health system. FSPs are intended to serve individuals with severe mental illness with the core charge to do “whatever it takes” to set clients, many of whom are the most vulnerable members of our communities struggling with homelessness, justice or child welfare system involvement and substance use, on the path to recovery and wellbeing.

After almost 15 years of implementing and learning about the FSP program, we have been funded by a philanthropic organization, The Ballmer Group, and supported by a nonprofit consulting firm, Third Sector Capital, as well as our academic partners at UCLA to redesign and deliver an improved FSP program. We undertook this effort because we believe that FSP can do more to reach those most in need of care and achieve better life outcomes. Guided by best clinical practice and the social determinants of health, we look to ensure that our service providers and clinics are fully equipped to help our clients living with severe mental illness stay in community and lead fulfilling lives.

What DMH is Doing

In 2018, DMH embarked on an effort to transform the FSP program so that front line staff have what they need to actually do “whatever it takes” to serve their clients. This redesign includes changes to the FSP service, staffing and funding models, increased flexibility and accountability and more responsiveness when it comes to administrative practices.

Specifically, we are:

- Incentivizing the enrollment and retention in FSP of those clients with the greatest needs, who may be hardest to reach and treat. These include individuals who are chronically homeless, frequent users of crisis physical and mental health services and those who are justice system or child welfare system involved.
- Funding true, multidisciplinary teams—including services to support housing, education, employment, resiliency, physical health, and mental health—that meets the complex needs of FSP clients and their families.
- Developing accountability metrics that are less focused on compliance and more focused on achieving client outcomes, including reduced systems involvement, improved educational attainment, increased housing stability, and reduced emergency service utilization.
- Instituting a continuous improvement system through which DMH will collect and analyze data to drive decision-making and accountability, measure progress against critical client outcomes and incentivize performance targets with respect to client outcomes.

Following LA County’s lead, a number of counties across California are now embarking on a similar effort to redesign their FSP programs with assistance from Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission funding. We will continue to work with these partner counties to share our lessons learned and help to improve community-based mental health services across the state.

Benefits to DMH Clients

DMH undertook this redesign of the FSP program to improve life outcomes for those we serve by empowering the delivery of the best care possible. We hope that through this new approach more of our clients will be able to find and maintain close, caring relationships (People), safe and secure living environments (Place) and meaningful things to do (Purpose).