

Nebraska's Professional Partner Program

Annual Report 2000

Executive Summary



*Individualized Care for Youth
with Serious Emotional
and Behavioral Disorders
and their Families*



Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health and Well Being
Office of Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Addiction Services

NEBRASKA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SYSTEM



DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES - DEPARTMENT OF REGULATION AND LICENSURE - DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND SUPPORT

NEBRASKA'S PROFESSIONAL PARTNER PROGRAM

April, 2001

Dear Friends:

I want to take this opportunity to introduce to you Nebraska's Professional Partner Program! Nebraska is fortunate to be one of the leaders in the effort to provide quality, home based services to families. Through a wraparound, and multi-systemic therapy approach, many children and families in Nebraska who are in trouble, are able to get the support they need to keep their families together.

Nebraska's Professional Partner Program offers a unique approach to serving families. The wraparound approach involves not only the family, but neighbors, schools, churches, law enforcement, service agencies, and communities, in finding out what it takes to make the family stronger. When families break apart, the cause often has a simple solution. This solution, however, may not be available or known to the family. If families can learn to draw upon available resources to solve their problems successfully, in the future more serious problems can be avoided. If children can stay with their families in times of trouble, the result is not only a cost savings on out-of-home care, but a family that feels more secure with the confidence that they can work things out together.

Professional Partners help to coordinate services around the family, assist them in becoming stronger, and offer tools to help them cope with their struggles. The family learns the necessary skills to continue to work out their problems on their own, to listen to each other, and have a community support system to fall back on when it seems they are all alone.

Since 1996, the Professional Partner Program has seen remarkable progress in the youth and families it serves. The number of families served per year has almost tripled since the Program's inception, with a total of 665 families participating this year alone. I am very excited about the success of the Professional Partner Program and the future it helps build for Nebraska's families.

The following report describes the history and objectives of the program, and provides data to support it's success. I invite you to read the next few pages to learn more about this innovative program. I also invite you to become involved in families – your own and others – as we seek to build stronger families and communities in Nebraska.

Respectfully,

Ron Ross
Director of the Department of Health and Human Services



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NEBRASKA'S PROFESSIONAL PARTNER PROGRAM

Purpose --- History --- Mission



The *history* of the **Professional Partner Program** began in the fall of 1995 when Professional Partners began working in each of Nebraska's six mental health regions. Since 1997, the Professional Partner Program has served 1,163 of Nebraska's youth and families. In Fiscal Year 2000 alone, 665 youth received services statewide.

The *purpose* of the **Nebraska Professional Partner Program** is to improve the lives of Nebraska's children with serious emotional/behavioral problems and their families by preventing expensive out-of-home placements, reducing juvenile crime, increasing school performance and attendance, and preventing children from becoming state wards just to access services.



The *mission* of the **Professional Partner Program** is to use the wraparound approach to coordinate services and supports for the families of children with a serious emotional/behavioral problems and to ensure they have a voice in, ownership of and access to a comprehensive, individualized support plan.



COMPONENTS OF THE PROFESSIONAL PARTNER PROGRAM

- ❖ A Family-centered philosophy and working with families as equal partners. This approach includes providing the majority of professional partner services in the natural environment of the youth and family (e.g., home, school) rather than in the professional partner's office
- ❖ Access to services is based on need and there is a clear, single point of access to services 24 hours per day, 7 days per week
- ❖ A "no reject, no eject" approach of unconditional care to eligible youth. Youth with extremely difficult behaviors shall not be terminated or excluded based upon difficult behaviors
- ❖ Meaningful involvement of parents, family members and consumers in advisory and policy development capacities
- ❖ Coordinated, interagency collaboration for assessment, referral, and service plan development, including an Individual and Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- ❖ Purchase and development of creative and individualized services and supports identified in the IFSP
- ❖ A Professional Partner to lead the coordination of services, with a small client load that ranges from 10-15 so the Partner can spend adequate amounts of time with each family
- ❖ Culturally competent and gender sensitive policies and processes
- ❖ The least restrictive, least intrusive, developmentally appropriate intervention in accordance with the youth and family needs within the most normalized environment
- ❖ Specific methods for moving toward an interagency system of care by developing referral sources, collaborative working relationships, and integration and coordination with families and public and private systems serving youth with emotional disorders such as schools, social services, probation, courts, law enforcement, developmental disability services, health providers, youth shelters and substance abuse services
- ❖ Maintained within an organization which does not provide any other mental health services, if possible, to enable an independent choice of service provider
- ❖ Flexible funds which follow the child and family, including traditional and non-traditional community-based services and support based on a case rate
- ❖ Measurable outcomes
- ❖ A public information strategy to inform others on how to access the Professional Partner system

WHO DO WE SERVE?

- **Number Served**—In Fiscal Year 2000, 665 children and families were served by the Professional Partner Program with an average length of service of 12.07 months.
- **Age/Gender**—The average age of youths served was 13.4 years. Overall, the majority were males (68%), although the male-female ratio varied by region.
- **Race/Ethnicity**—Most of the children served during FY00 were Caucasian (84%) although many other ethnic groups also received services (African American- 5%, Hispanic- 6%, Native American/Alaskan Native- 1%, Asian- less than 1%, Biracial- 1% and other- 3%). These percentages are similar to the representation of these groups in Nebraska's overall population of youth ages 18 years and younger.
- **Diagnoses**—The most common diagnoses in a sample of participants were Depressive-Affective (32%), Behavioral Disorders (26%), and ADHD (21%). The majority of youths had two or more co-morbid disorders at the time of referral.
- **Presenting Problems**—In FY00, the most common presenting problems at intake across the regions were: Depression, ADHD, Non-Compliance, Physical Aggression, Anxiety, Property Damage/Theft, Poor Peer Interactions, School Issues/Truancy, Need for Community Services, and Lack of Financial Resources.
- **Juvenile Justice Involvement**—In the Families First and Foremost program, 60% of the youth served had been found guilty of at least one offense, and 34% had been in a jail or detention center prior to entry in the program.
- **School**—41.5% of youth had been suspended from school in the previous six months. In addition, 34% reported that they were failing at least half of their classes.
- **Income Level**—Approximately half of the families served in Region III had income levels below the poverty level for two-parent, two-children homes.
- **CAFAS**—The average 8-Scale CAFAS score (a survey that measures a child's functioning) of youth at intake was 114. This score indicates that a restrictive or supervised living situation would be needed if wraparound was not available.

“...If I wouldn't have decided to try one more doctor, I wouldn't have found out about the OMNI Professional Partner Program, and I don't even want to think about what would have happened to Tom. By now he probably would have been drug addict, alcoholic, criminal, or dead. Thanks to OMNI, he has a chance at a bright future. He's even talking about going to film school after he gets his GED. His grandmother would be very proud of what he has accomplished, at least she knew about OMNI helping us, and that was a great relief to her.

OMNI has given all of us parents so much. Not just financial support when we need it for medication, therapists, etc., but badly needed emotional support. They've given us back our belief in ourselves as parents. Through OMNI, I have attended quite a few seminars and workshops, meeting not only other parents and hearing their stories, but sitting down to a talk with professional people that are actually interested in what I think this state needs in regards to our children. Parents like myself were responsible for setting up Rites for Families, and I am so proud to have been a small part of that. It's unbelievable what a group of parents can accomplish, and it's all thanks to the Professional Partner Program bringing us together.

Thank you, OMNI for all you have done for us; words don't seem like enough. You've given me my son back, and you've given both of us our dignity back.” –A Parent

WHAT SERVICES ARE THEY RECEIVING?

In addition to the wraparound process and service coordination components provided by the Professional Partner, the Program uses flexible funding to provide participants with mental health treatment and other services for which alternative funding is not available. These services typically include family therapy, individual therapy, psychological assessment, mentoring, transportation, recreation, respite care, tutoring, and support services. However, the funding may be used in any way the wraparound team feels it will be most beneficial to the youth and family. In addition, families often receive informal supports through donations from communities and businesses.

“Our son, Billy is eleven years old and suffers from conduct disorder, Intermittent Explosive Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder as well as Post-traumatic stress disorder due to abuse from his biological mother before he came to live with us. Billy’s school counselor referred us to the program. When we met with our professional partner, she asked us what Billy’s strengths were; no one had ever asked that before! We sat down with her and developed a plan specifically to fit Billy’s needs, with a team of people we helped form. Our Professional Partner makes herself available to us day or night using her pager. When Billy has an outburst we call her and she helps calm him down. Through the flexible funding the Professional Partner Program has available to them, we were able to purchase and do things that no other agency could have. Some of the things the Professional Partner Program’s flexible funding has helped us with are transportation from school if Billy became uncontrollable, anger management classes, tae kwon do classes, YMCA pass, mentor, gas and lodging for hospital visits, hog processing so we could have meat for the year, and diagnostic testing. Billy has come a long way since we started the program and it is mostly due to our Professional Partner and our team. They all truly care about Billy and my family. With their help I believe Billy will grow to be a wonderful young man.” –A Parent

AT WHAT COST?

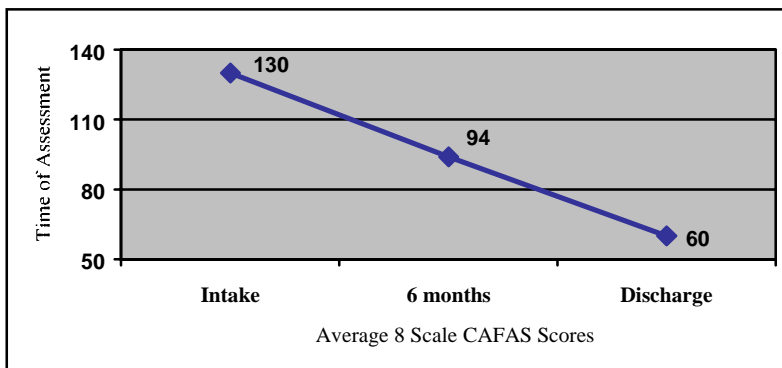
- Funding is based on a case rate of \$7,800 per youth per year. The Professional Partner Program helps prevent the cost of out-of-home placement.

<i>Placement</i>	<i>Cost per Year</i>
Group Home II	\$70,554.50
Agency Based Foster Care	\$20,075.50
Hastings Drug/Alcohol Unit	\$121,910
Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center	\$24,000
Professional Partner Program	\$7,800.00

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

The six regions of the Professional Partner Program gather a variety of outcome data. These results indicate that youth are satisfied with the program, are functioning significantly better, and are remaining in the home with their families. A sample of these results are presented below.

- The *CAFAS* scores across regions consistently indicate that the youth are functioning better in many different areas of their life. The following data is for discharged children from Region IV which records *CAFAS* scores at intake, after 6 months in the program, and at discharge.



- A score of 100 or above indicates that the child likely needs residential treatment or another form of intensive services, such as wraparound.
- A score of 50 – 90 indicates that the child can live in the community with additional supports.

- The results from *Satisfaction Surveys* that are collected twice a year and at discharge were also very positive, indicating that the families, team members and youth feel good about their involvement with the Professional Partner Program and believe it is beneficial for the youth and their families. For example, 67% of families believed their child was doing better as a result of the program and 92% would use the program again. Furthermore, 95% of parents felt that the professionals providing services were respectful of their culture, traditions, lifestyle and beliefs.
- In addition, Region III showed a significant decrease in *out-of-home placements* among the youth they served. Over a six month period, the number of children placed outside the home decreased from 19 to 3, with most of the children returning to the home during the first month in the program.
- Data gathered from Region IV show that youth's *negative behaviors* decrease over time, as assessed by the Weekly Adjustment Indicator, and that positive behaviors also increased significantly.

SUMMARY

Together, these data illustrate the success of Nebraska's Professional Partner Program in targeting youth with severe emotional and behavioral problems for wraparound services that focus on the strength of the family, community supports, and flexible funding for individualized services. Of youth participating in the program, 79% feel that they are not getting "the same old services that other kids get." Indeed, it seems that for a fraction of the cost for the State of Nebraska, they are also not getting the same old results.

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AA/ADA/EOE

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