

Substance Abuse Treatment Task Force Final Report
Executive Summary
September 2001

Background and Overview

In 1999, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 865, which required the Governor to create a Task Force to examine the adult and juvenile offenders' need for and access to substance abuse treatment. Following the distribution of its January 2000 Report, the Task Force and its subcommittees continued its work on specific recommendations and the Standardized Model to identify the need for substance abuse treatment. Additional funds were passed by the Legislature in 2001 to implement of the Standardized Model; however, the Governor vetoed the bill. Fortunately, limited funds were found to complete the implementation of the standardized model from Byrne grant funds and from Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant funds administered by the Crime Commission. The purpose of this report is to document the Task Force's work since January 2000 and to outline the next steps for change if additional funds are secured for this effort.

Nebraska's Progress on Task Force Recommendations

The Task Force published 38 recommendations for improving substance abuse treatment within criminal and juvenile justice agencies in the January 2000 report. Since January, substantial progress was documented on at least 25 (66%) of these recommendations. In many instances, the Task Force and its subcommittees were directly responsible for this work and in others, the Task Force report provided the impetus for the work completed by other agencies and/or entities. A summary of these accomplishments is contained in the full report.

Standardization Subcommittee Report

The Standardization Subcommittee was originally formed by the Substance Abuse Task Force to develop and recommend standardized substance abuse evaluation instruments for adults and juveniles processed in the criminal and juvenile justice systems (LB 865, Task 10) under the direction of Ellen Fabian Brokofsky, Chief Probation Officer, District #5. The Standardization Subcommittee continued its work to finalize the mission, description, and specifics of the Standardized Model.

Mission of the Standardized Model:

Overall, the mission of the Standardized Model is to ensure that offenders are screened, assessed, and evaluated consistently for substance abuse treatment need; when necessary, appropriate treatment is accessed for offenders; information-sharing between justice agencies and treatment providers is formalized; and appropriate levels of treatment care are integrated with offender accountability.

Description of the Standardized Model:

Screening

- ❑ Purpose: To determine the presence of a current substance abuse problem and identify the need for further evaluation.
- ❑ What: Completion of Simple Screening Instrument (contained in full report) by all justice agencies.
- ❑ Who, when, and where: Justice personnel must administer the Simple Screening Instrument for every offender (adult or juvenile) who enters their agency.

Risk Assessment

- ❑ Purpose: To ensure that justice agencies provide relevant information on offenders' static and dynamic risk factors to evaluators consistently.
- ❑ What: Completion of Standardized Risk Assessment for Substance Abusing Offenders (contained in full report) to summarize information collected from adult and juvenile justice agency risk assessment tools. This form will then be given to providers for every evaluation referral made.
- ❑ Who, when, and where: Justice personnel must complete this form for every offender (adult or juvenile) who is referred for an evaluation by the court prior to the evaluation.

Evaluation

- ❑ Purpose: To ensure consistent and accurate diagnoses and recommendations for treatment and to formalize information sharing between justice personnel and treatment providers.
- ❑ What (Adults): Requires providers to use the Addiction Severity Index (contained in full report) in addition to additional tool from an approved list (e.g., Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory—SASSI) and report findings and recommendations to justice agencies in a standardized way.
- ❑ What (Juveniles): Requires providers to use the Substance Abuse Module from Comprehensive Adolescent Severity Inventory (contained in full report) in addition to additional tool from an approved list (e.g., Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory—SASSI) and report findings and recommendations to justice agencies in a standardized way.
- ❑ Who and when: Any treatment provider who is completing an evaluation for the justice system (i.e., an approved justice provider). If providers do not follow this format, the judge or referring justice agency will not accept the evaluation.

Risk Assessment Subcommittee Report

The Risk Assessment Subcommittee was formed under the direction of Ken Gallagher, University of Nebraska—Lincoln to produce a summary of risk information currently collected by justice agencies, and a standardized format for providing relevant information to providers from justice agencies.

Training Subcommittee Report

To address training, a subcommittee was formed under the direction of Deborah Carey-Minardi, Chief Probation Officer, District #4, and Cathy Waller-Borovac, Administrator, Office of Community Justice, Department of Corrections to identify cross-training needs for justice and providers, develop curricula for cross-training, and integrate justice issues into the Division of Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Addiction Services 2001 Statewide Conference.

Crucial Next Steps for Implementation

Steps Related to the Overall Process

- ❑ Secure funding to implement the Standardized Model.
- ❑ Contract with external source to oversee the implementation of the Standardized Model.
- ❑ Continue Task Force meetings temporarily to oversee this process in an effort to secure an infrastructure for future developments in this area.

Steps Related to the Standardized Model:

- ❑ Secure formal agreements from justice agencies to adhere to the Standardized Model and incorporate substance abuse training curriculum components.
- ❑ Develop the criteria and monitoring system for “approved providers”.
- ❑ Develop policy and procedure manual for implementation of Standardized Model.
- ❑ Conduct formal pilot studies of the Standardized Model.
- ❑ Conduct process and outcome evaluations to examine the utility and effectiveness of the standardized model to produce accurate and consistent information and facilitate information sharing across justice agencies and providers.
- ❑ Implement full Standardized Model system wide.

Steps Related to the Risk Assessment Process:

- ❑ Complete work on models that correlate risk level with appropriate treatment need to guide integrated decision-making for dispositions and sentencing.
- ❑ Produce policy procedure model for agencies following the Standardized Model.
- ❑ Pilot test the Standardized Model using the risk assessment tool.
- ❑ Conduct an evaluation to examine the utility and effectiveness of the risk assessment tool.
- ❑ Implement full Standardized Model throughout all justice agencies.

Steps Related to the Implementation of Training Standards:

- ❑ Complete cross training curriculum for providers
- ❑ Integrate curriculum components into current justice training programs
- ❑ Develop training infrastructure for Standardized Model
- ❑ Develop criminal justice training requirements and opportunities for providers.
- ❑ Train “trainers” on the entire curriculum
- ❑ Conduct an evaluation to examine the utility and effectiveness of the training curricula and identify future training needs.