

# APPENDIX B

## Framework for a State Mental Health Authority

(Adapted from the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
*POSITION STATEMENT ON A FRAMEWORK FOR COMPREHENSIVE STATE MENTAL  
HEALTH SYSTEM*)

### Values and Principles Essential To a Comprehensive State Mental Health System

The creation of a Comprehensive State Mental Health *Plan* is a first step toward the ultimate goal of creating “Comprehensive State Mental *System*.” Although states must plan more broadly, transforming mental health care requires implementing the plan and coordinating and integrating relevant services and supports. Only such deep and broad action will create what will be from the perspective of the consumer and family a single effective, transparent, and navigable system. Although comprehensive state mental health systems will vary significantly from state to state according to their unique characteristics, all systems should be rooted in shared values. They should:

- Provide convenient access to a comprehensive array of consumer- and family-centered services and supports in the least restrictive community-based settings appropriate for the consumer.
- Recognize and promote recovery and resiliency as expected outcomes for all consumers.
- Promote policies and practices that achieve for consumers the earliest possible detection of mental health problems and early intervention.
- Ensure that all health care programs address mental health with the same urgency as physical health and that the policies of all programs that serve adults and children with mental disorders – e.g., child welfare, Medicaid, education, housing, criminal and juvenile justice, substance abuse treatment, and employment services – consider their specialized mental health needs.
- Emphasize efficiency, effectiveness, and performance improvement; base resource allocation and planning on well-measured outcomes; minimize administrative costs; and promote evidence-based and promising practices.

### System Characteristics

Building on this foundation, a successful comprehensive state system will share several common characteristics:

- First, developing an effective system must begin with the recognition that most of the resources that fund services for people with mental health needs come from federal and state programs outside the jurisdiction of the state mental health authority (SMHA). In most cases, these programs are not designed as “mental health programs” at all. Therefore, fundamental to planning the system will be establishing relationships and coordinating policy development and implementation activities among the applicable state agencies. This is the case in Iowa where a large percentage of mental health dollars come through the federal Medicaid program.

When devising a comprehensive state system, Iowa must strive to involve all agencies that deliver, fund, or administer services and supports used or needed by people with a mental illness and/or their families. Many factors, however, will determine the planning process, such as the state’s fiscal health, organizational structure, political structure (e.g.,

the role of local government in financing and managing mental health services), and the status of its policy agenda and priorities. Thus, states will plan and implement their comprehensive state systems at their own pace and in a manner that fits their unique circumstances. Iowa's unique county-managed mental health system provides challenges in the development of a consistent, statewide system.

- Second, Iowa needs to ensure that other stakeholders play an active role in the process. This is most important with respect to the people the system is designed to serve. Consumers (including youth as well as adults) and family members and their advocacy organizations must be involved in all levels of the decision-making process, including the development, management, and oversight of the comprehensive system. In addition, counties and local governments are responsible for the direct delivery and management of mental health care delivery, their representatives need to be actively engaged in the planning process. Other important sectors include private providers and payors.
- Third, Iowa's success in transforming its mental health system will be significantly affected by the roles the governor and legislature plays in the process. The Final Report of the New Freedom Commission states that "the Office of the Governor should coordinate each [comprehensive state mental health] plan." It will be critical to have the support of the chief executive officer and the legislature if we are to succeed. The governor has the unique authority to convene the relevant state agency heads and hold them accountable for their performance. States that have begun the comprehensive system planning process know the value of having the governor's attention and participation of the legislature

