Successful Principles and Strategies for Integrated Funding
to Support Models like High Fidelity Wraparound

Colorado LINKS for Mental Health's mission is to promote partnerships among state agencies and key stakeholder groups by weaving together existing efforts to create a more coordinated continuum of behavioral health services for Colorado children, youth, and families. To further its mission, Colorado LINKS commissioned a study to determine key financing strategies used to support *high fidelity wraparound* given the strong interest at both the state and local level to expand the practice statewide and as a means of learning how funding can be integrated across systems.[1]

The **wraparound process** is defined as "a collaborative team-based approach to service and support planning… to meet the needs - and improve the lives - of children and youth with complex issues and their families" (VanDenBerg, Bruns & Burchard, 2003, p. 4). **High fidelity wraparound** requires an adherence to both a philosophy and set of specific practices (Rast & Bruns, 2003).

Successful Funding Principles
Bazelon Center, 2003

1. Leadership & collaboration
2. Collaborative planning across agencies and with families
3. Strategy to merge and maximize different funding sources
4. Outcomes & accountability

This study included: (1) a literature review of the wraparound process and integrated financing strategies, in particular The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law's publication, *Mix and Match, Using Federal Programs to Support Interagency Systems of Care for Children with Mental Health Care Needs*; and (2) interviews with key stakeholders in Chaffee, El Paso, and Teller Counties, each of which is using *high fidelity wraparound* as the service delivery method for youth and families served through their Collaborative Management Program (CMP).[2] The interviews focused on four important principles to developing integrated funding across systems to address the needs of children, youth and families with complex issues.

Principle #1: Leadership & Collaboration

Successful cross–system funding strategies start with leadership and collaboration. Both of which are essential for long-term sustainable success in improving child and family outcomes. In successful *system of care* efforts

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[1] Please note that the term "wraparound" has a different meaning under Medicaid. Wrap-around benefits are Medicaid services that exceed coverage limitations as required or the contractor is not obligated to provide them under the contract. (Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing at: http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/HCPF/HCPF/1218622604843)

[2] For information about the CMP go to www.cdhs.state.co.us/childwelfare/1451CMP.htm)

a core leadership group is formed that has the commitment of high level policy makers who buy into the concept or at least support the collaboration's broad goals and empower staff to effectively collaborate across agencies and with families. This also requires leaders to give up some control to further the collaboration.

Successful funding strategies are also dependent on the collaborative having a clear vision of what they are trying to achieve in order to address the child and family's needs while still serving each agency's goals. Consequently, the collaborative must spend time developing and agreeing on the shared goals and principles that will guide its work. This allows the collaborative to identify commonalities across agencies from which to build upon as well as to acknowledge and respect any differences.

Examples/Key Findings from Chaffee, El Paso and Teller Counties

Like all CMPs, the counties interviewed have an Interagency Oversight Group (IOG) that forms their core cross-system leadership group. Although it can be challenging, youth and family involvement at this policy level is an important component that should be addressed early on in the process and not as an afterthought. In El Paso County, a family member who is a graduate of the wraparound process sits on the IOG, and recently a youth representative has been approved to sit on the IOG as well. Teller County also has a youth member on its IOG.

Each county has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that commits to the creation of the IOG and collaborative management processes. In all three counties, the IOG made the decision to use *high fidelity wraparound* as the service delivery process because of the alignment between wraparound's guiding principles, CMP goals, and MOU requirements. The idea to use the wraparound process was first brought to the IOG's attention by one of the IOG leaders who also committed their agency's resources to help initiate the process. In two of the counties, the key leader was from Human Services. Aside from recommending the wraparound process, the Teller County Director of Human Services provided funding to support the process through the Child Welfare Block Grant. In El Paso, the Director of Human Services also made a significant commitment by converting existing casework staff positions, funded through Core Services, into wraparound facilitator positions that do not carry a caseload. In Chaffee County, the Superintendent of Schools provided office space and support for the wraparound staff so that it would be viewed more as a community effort rather than any one agency's initiative.

These key leaders were well respected and had good working relationships with other community leaders, which was essential to bringing others on board to commit to the *high fidelity wraparound* process. Also, all three communities had a long standing history of collaboration that helped agencies to agree to support the process, which in some cases took time in order for them to understand their role in the wraparound process.

Checklist of Questions/Issues to Consider

- *Establish a common mission and vision, and a set of shared goals and outcomes across agencies and with youth and families.*
- *Commit as a collaborative to a set of guiding values, including prioritizing children's and families' needs over agency issues and staff needs.*
- *Engage in a process to (1) identify what is working and what is not; and (2) identify gaps, overlaps, conflicts and poor outcomes to be avoided in the future. This will build the case for adopting high fidelity wraparound as a means of addressing these challenges.*

- *Establish and implement a governance and management plan with a long range view that takes into account the potential impact of a change in political leadership.*

Principle #2: Collaborative Planning and Implementation across Agencies and with Families

A successful interagency *system of care* will integrate resources behind a common plan for each child and family to which all agencies are committed. Instead of tightly controlling expenditures called for by the plan, these systems establish an extensive provider network that operates flexibly and is supported by some combination of blending and braiding various funding streams. Although the organizational culture of some agencies can work against such collaboration, these barriers need to be recognized and addressed.

As the planning process is designed, the broad range of issues raised by the children, youth, and families who will be served through the improved system must be addressed. Youth and family engagement is critical in the planning and implementation stages since it can create and maintain the constant pressure that calls for real improvements. It can also help motivate policy makers to support a process that may not be able to immediately demonstrate its effectiveness.

> *"Everyone must come to the team meeting willing to work outside of their 'silos' to develop a "one family, one plan" that brings together all of the resources under that common plan".*

A training program on *high fidelity wraparound* and *systems of care* for administrators and direct staff is also needed in order for the planning process to succeed and to maintain collaboration across agencies and with youth and families. This training must be ongoing given the frequency of staff turnover among human service professionals.

Examples/Key Findings from Chaffee, El Paso, and Teller Counties

High fidelity wraparound is a voluntary process that youth and families can opt into, provided they meet the CMP eligibility criteria. All three counties have set the eligibility criteria as children from birth through 21 years of age who are involved with two or more IOG partner agencies and their families. Typically, youth and families are involved in the wraparound process anywhere from 6 months to 18 months depending on the extensiveness of their needs, with most graduating at around one year.

As implemented in these communities, *high fidelity wraparound* is a youth and family-driven, team based process. Youth and families first identify their goals and needs. The wraparound team, which is selected by the youth and family, helps to develop and implement a common *Individualized Services and Support Plan* across systems based on the youth and family's unique strengths and culture. Good working relationships and communication between agencies and with youth and families is a must in order for the process to succeed. Through this process a broad spectrum of services and supports can be provided by participating organizations and by the youth and family's natural support system, such as family members, friends, neighbors, and community and faith-based members. These natural supports are important team members as they will continue to support the youth and family after they graduate from wraparound.

Trained wraparound staff is essential to the implementation of *high fidelity wraparound*. This staff consists of *wraparound facilitators, wraparound coaches* (who often act as supervisors as well), *family support partners*, and a *wraparound coordinator* that oversees the overall initiative. In Teller and Chaffee Counties, the *wraparound coordinator* supervises the *wraparound facilitators* and *family support partners*. In Teller, the *wraparound coordinator* also coordinates the CMP and sits on the IOG's Executive Committee, which helps to keep the IOG engaged and committed to *high fidelity wraparound.*

In *high fidelity wraparound, wraparound facilitators* typically work with only 8-10 families. *Family support partne*rs work with the *wraparound facilitators* often as a team and are a support to the youth and families. The *family support partner* is critical to holding true to the value of a youth and family-driven process and the success of youth and families. Across the country, some communities have also developed the role of a *youth support partner*, which is similar to that of the *family support partner*. In El Paso County, the *family support partners* are graduates of the wraparound process. Currently, El Paso has 7 *wraparound facilitators* and 4 part time *family support partners*, and a *wraparound supervisor* and *coach* that provide direct supervision of staff. One challenge for El Paso is hiring *family support partners* who have certain criminal convictions because of the county's concern around liability despite the fact that these family members have turned their life around and are no longer the same person they were prior to graduating from wraparound. El Paso suggested that Colorado consider legislation similar to that enacted in Washington State to address this barrier.

Given the importance of having well-trained wraparound staff and the high turnover of human services staff, El Paso County decided to develop its own capacity to train staff by establishing the *HB1451 Training Institute*. The *Training Institute* is financed through El Paso County's CMP earned incentive dollars that it receives based on its performance outcomes. El Paso County also developed the *Wraparound Coalition* where agencies and communities implementing the wraparound process can meet to discuss their experiences, share their expertise and exchange ideas, including financing ones. All three communities interviewed are members of the *Wraparound Coalition*. As members, Chaffee and Teller Counties can send staff to be trained for free at the *Training Institute*. In return they train others through the institute without compensation. Organizations not involved with either the *Wraparound Coalition* or the *HB1451 Training Institute* can still attend trainings for a small fee.

Checklist of Questions/Issues to Consider
- *Define the children, youth, and families to be served, including those with the most complex issues for whom system reform is most needed.*
- *Prepare a marketing plan to address the issues of various stakeholders: agencies, youth, and families, and policymakers to collaborate together in reaching and implementing one plan for each child and family.*
- *Recruit diverse wraparound staff, and youth, and families for service delivery, including youth and families that have graduated from the wraparound process.*
- *Develop and implement a comprehensive training strategy to ensure that wraparound staff has the skills to deliver high fidelity wraparound.*

- *Engage and support youth and families as part of the planning and implementation of the wraparound process at the system and service delivery level. Assure that cultural competence, strength-based, individualized, and youth and family driven values are part of the wraparound process and included in all agencies' programming.*

Principle #3: Strategy to Merge and Maximize Different Funding Streams

In order to develop an effective funding strategy, system planners must first understand what resources are available to them and how to use them in the most advantageous way. Then they must determine in what ways funding streams can be used, the timeframe in which they can be used, who can provide and who can benefit from the funding, and the reporting requirements. There are two different categories of funding used to build an effective funding strategy: those that are ongoing such as block grants or entitlement programs and those that are discretionary grants or private funding, which although time-limited can be used for such things as initiating critical services missing from the continuum, providing training/technical assistance, or building the data infrastructure. No local *system of care*, however, can be sustained effectively without ongoing financial support.

> ***Blended funding*** occurs when funds are combined into a single pool from which they can be allocated to providers. ***Braided funding*** occurs when funds from different sources are used to pay for a service package for an individual child, but tracking and accountability for each funding stream is maintained at the administrative level.

Once the funding inventory is completed, planners should create the strategy that merges and maximizes different funding sources so that child and family needs drive decisions on which services to provide. Blending or braiding funds offers flexibility and allows providers, and youth and families to focus on outcomes. Regardless of which approach is taken, *systems of care* must still track, document, and account for the funds they spend. Blended funding has advantages over braided funding – even on a small scale - because it offers significantly more flexibility and reduces the work required for reporting and accountability measures. Blended funding can allow systems to fund activities that are not reimbursable through specific categorical programs. Braiding, on the other hand, allows resources to be tracked more closely for accountability to program administrators. It recognizes the categorical nature of existing programs and avoids some of the conflicts that can arise in blended funding pools. Often communities will braid funds first before engaging in a blended funding strategy.

Examples/Key Findings from Chaffee, El Paso, and Teller Counties

Although it looks a little different in each community, all three counties have a funding strategy to determine which funding stream can pay for what services and supports. First and foremost, they look to their partner agencies to provide the services and supports called for in the plan as part of the agency's budget. The counties also make sure that children and families are enrolled in all possible public benefit programs that can be used to pay for the needed services, like Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+), Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), SSI, Food Stamps, and others. For example in El Paso, when a child is in placement there are a variety of funding streams that can be used, such as Title IV-E, Medicaid, and Core Services, that can support that placement and the services provided. When a child is at home and the family does not have health insurance, El Paso has provided services through Core Services. Schools can pay for a portion of the

educational costs for day treatment and then, depending on the child's eligibility, the treatment portion can be paid for through Core Services or Medicaid. There are also Special Economic Assistance dollars for families through the Department of Human Services, where families have the ability to access $400 per year for things such as rent deposits, auto repair, etc.

For those services and supports that cannot be provided through any of the partner agencies, each county addresses the gaps through its CMP incentive dollars and other more flexible funding streams, like Core Services, Preserving Safe and Stable Families, or the Child Welfare Block Grant. Incentive dollars are also used in cases of emergency even if another funding source could pay for the expense but for the fact that time is of the essence.

In Teller County, the *wraparound coordinator* integrates the funding to support the services and supports provided through the *individualized wraparound plans* by monitoring the expenditures to make sure that the CMP is using the funding in accordance with its requirements. As plans come into her office, the *wraparound coordinator* reviews them to determine which funding stream can pay for what services. In El Paso they are updating their funding request process to include one form that helps identify which funding stream can pay for which services and which funding must be exhausted first before accessing others. El Paso is also interested in exploring blended funding strategies similar to those used in Wraparound Milwaukee, which has a capitated rate for Medicaid and case rates for other agencies to form its blended funding pool. For El Paso, this model is a viewed as a potential strategy to sustain *high fidelity wraparound*.

Aside from high end services, paying for staff positions and training also drives the cost of the wraparound process. In Chaffee County, the CMP incentive funds are used to support the wraparound staff. In Teller, the *wraparound coordinator's* position is supported by CMP incentive funds, and funds from the Department of Social Services and Probation. One of the Teller County *wraparound facilitators'* positions is supported by an EARS (Expelled and At-Risk Students) grant through the Colorado Department of Education and another is funded by the Department of Social Services. In El Paso County, the *family support partner* positions are paid for through CMP incentive funds as is the Training Institute. As mentioned above, the El Paso *wraparound facilitator* positions are supported by Core Services.

Checklist of Questions/Issues to Consider

- *Conduct a survey of agency personnel, and youth and families, asking what works well in the current service delivery system and what does not, to identify services that require expansion and those that are not helpful. It can also identify where there are gaps in the service array.*
- *Set up and implement a review process to determine the services that the collaborative wants to fund and the eligibility status of the group of children, youth and families they intend to serve. Use Colorado BRAID[3] to start collecting the following key information: who is eligible for which funding streams; which local agencies draw down the funding; who can provide services; how funds must be accounted for, and what are the administrative requirements.*

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[3] Colorado BRAID is an online database of funding streams available in Colorado design to help system builders at the state and local level learn about funding streams for children and families as well as regulations governing their use.

- *Once the funding inventory is completed, map where funds currently exist in the system and identify opportunities as to how some of these dollars might be redirected to more effective strategies. Consider how programs can work together to fund particular services (e.g., Title IV-E can fund room and board for therapeutic foster care while Medicaid can fund training and services for the therapeutic foster family).*
- *Create and implement a plan that addresses the need for integrated cross-agency financing, clinical practice, and training of staff.*

Principle #4: Outcomes and Accountability

Early on in the process there needs to be a focus on outcomes and recognition of the need for accountability. *Systems of care* need to adopt appropriate performance indicators to measure outcomes related to child and family progress as well as cost. Collecting good data, therefore, is critical in order to monitor, evaluate and demonstrate the *system of care's* success. Having a data infrastructure in place can provide the essential information needed to ensure this accountability. Efforts, however, cannot stop here. Collaboratives must continue to evaluate the outcomes achieved by the *system of care* and constantly work to improve its responsiveness and effectiveness, and youth and families need to be a part of the monitoring process.

Examples/Key Findings from Chaffee, El Paso, and Teller Counties

All CMP participating communities, including Chaffee, El Paso, and Teller Counties, must develop and meet performance based measures in four areas (i.e., child welfare, juvenile justice, education, and health/behavioral health). Incentive funds are available to those counties that achieve or exceed their performance goals. In addition, as of January 7, 2007, all IOGs must report the following to the executive director of each mandatory participating department:

- Number of children and families served including a description of any reduction in duplication or fragmentation;
- Services provided;
- Description of estimated costs for implementing the CMP;
- Accounting of moneys that were reinvested in additional services;
- Description of identified barriers to the ability of the state and county provide effective services; and
- Any other relevant information to improve service delivery.

All three counties collect outcome data as part of their CMP reporting. Example outcomes achieved by the wraparound process in Chaffee County include: increased school attendance and academic achievement; reduction in open child welfare cases; and increased enrollment in public health care programs for children. In El Paso County, the wraparound facilitators collect the outcome data and enter it into an Access database designed by El Paso County that tracks such things as client outcomes and service costs.[4] In two of the past three years, El Paso realized cost savings due to the implementation of the *high fidelity wraparound* process. El Paso measures costs by comparing the youth and family service costs for the year prior to enrolling in

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[4] All CMPs are also beginning to use the database developed by Omni to track outcome data on a statewide basis.

wraparound with the service costs for the year after graduating from wraparound. According to El Paso County, this past year it did not realize any savings because a significant number of youth needed residential services, with many of these youth and families being referred to wraparound at the point of possible placement, some of which could have been prevented if identification and referral had occurred earlier in the process. Teller County also reports documented cost savings across a number of different agencies, including education and child welfare, due to the wraparound process.

Checklist of Questions/Issues to Consider

- *Create and implement a plan that will inform program modifications that includes how to (1) obtain useful data; (2) develop the necessary data infrastructure; and (3) compile, analyze, and report findings. Steps to develop the plan include:*
    - *Determine the data that is needed to monitor the collaborative's goals and long and short-term outcomes;*
    - *Identify the data that is currently being collected and any gaps and/or duplications;*
    - *Identify and address barriers in the collection and sharing of data;*
    - *Research how other communities in Colorado and in other states have addressed the collection, analysis and sharing of data that can be adapted by your community;*
    - *Use the evaluation results to inform decision-making; and*
    - *Disseminate information to key stakeholders and the community.*

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