

The Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund supports training programs that address workforce skill needs identified by health care providers as they work to improve patient care and reduce costs. Commonwealth Corporation administers this fund on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

Clinical & Support Options (CSO) is a full service behavioral health agency in Western and Central Massachusetts. Employing more than 600 multi-disciplinary staff with an operating budget of more than \$30 million, they have helped thousands of families in the region since 1955.



Workforce Challenge:

Many of CSO's clients with serious mental illness and substance use disorders suffer extremely poor health and have little or no access to primary medical care, which hinders the effectiveness of behavioral health interventions. In an effort to bridge the care gap and create an integrated, patient-centered, holistic behavioral health "home", CSO has outstationed behavioral health clinicians at primary care offices in the region, and is outreaching to local practices to establish relationships focused on referral, consultation, and coordination of care. However, mental health clinicians lack the training, skills and medical knowledge necessary to help improve clients' health outcomes or to be able to connect them to appropriate services.

“The training heightened my awareness of the importance of coordinating with the primary care providers of all my clients. I've started paying more attention to my clients' medical conditions, understanding that they may be contributing to things we'd identify as behavioral health issues.”

-Joseph Deckro, Outpatient Therapist, Pittsfield clinic

Training Strategy and Expected Outcomes:

CSO developed a broad training strategy that reached across a large geography and several organizations. Through this grant, CSO designed and delivered an advanced, CEU-qualified Integrated Health Management Series, enrolled staff in peer leader certificate trainings in wellness and prevention, and provided Mental Health First Aid training which they extended to community responders and the general public. Their objective was to develop skills for mental health and substance abuse practitioners in engaging patients in the improvement of their own health, connecting them to appropriate services, and supporting integrated treatment plans. This initiative was also designed to play a key role in developing CSO's health home model of care coordination, ensuring physical health issues are identified and fully integrated into care planning. As a result:

- 641 internal and partner clinical staff participated in training.
- CSO clinicians report that they are able to comfortably address the medical needs of clients in the treatment planning process.
- 84% of CSO patients have a documented medical profile in their record.
- 1 peer specialist who attended Recovery Coaching training is now serving as a supervisor of peer specialists.
- 453 community members were trained in Mental Health First Aid, including teachers, police officers and firefighters.
- CSO is now positioned to serve as a Behavioral Health Home. In addition, CSO will be providing a Children's Health Home model as part of a Mass Health redesign, providing care in three counties in Western MA.