

Legislative Priorities Summary

Central Receiving Systems 40% funding cut (\$8.2 M)

Summary: In 2016, Senate Bill 12 established a “no-wrong-door” model for the delivery of acute care services to persons who have mental health or substance use disorders, or both, which optimizes access to care, regardless of the entry point to the behavioral health care system. A Central Receiving System (CRS) is comprised of public receiving facilities that serve as single points of entry for individuals transported by law enforcement under the Baker Act into the mental health system. This system has saved tens of thousands of hours in law enforcement time, millions of dollars in jail costs and has reduced unnecessary hospital emergency room admissions. These Central Receiving Systems serve 20 counties across the state with Local governments providing 50% of the cost.

Immediate community effects:

- Significantly longer wait times for law enforcement
- Increased utilization of emergency rooms
- More jail resources expended on individuals with mental illness who, more appropriately, should be receiving care in a community setting- rather than the criminal justice system

“The Centralized Receiving System initiative was an opportunity for Broward County to expand and enhance our existing resources to help support and improve our System of Care. To accomplish this endeavor, a collaboration of service providers with aligned missions came together to bring their unique experiences and expertise so that individuals who are at high risk of hospitalization or incarceration may easily access a broader range of services. By reducing funding to the CRS, the seamless coordination, referral and transition to services will be significantly challenged in meeting the needs of this high-risk population.” - Dr. Steven Ronik, Henderson Behavioral Health

\$20 Million Reduction to Florida’s Federal Block Grant

Summary: Florida’s federal block grant funding for community behavioral health services was reduced by \$20 million. For a system already struggling to meet the demand, these cuts have had a crippling impact and forced community providers to reduce or eliminate critical services.

Effect of Program reductions and closures:

- Local law enforcement, county jails and hospital emergency departments are forced to serve as the de facto safety net system at the local level, diverting resources away from other critical needs
- Children’s’ services; Residential services, Detox services, Forensic services, HIV services, Outpatient care, and Clinical Care programs are closing or reduced across the state
- Fewer Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) beds are available
- Central Receiving Systems will serve thousands’ less Floridians and law enforcement and jails will pick up the slack
- Wait times have increased, from same-day treatment to 2-3 weeks
- Programs will be eliminated, creating a state-wide reduction in jobs

While we applaud the Florida legislature’s efforts to address the opioid epidemic by increasing penalties for those making the drugs available on the street, and authorizing that \$27M in federal grant funds (State Targeted Response, (STR) grant) be made immediately available, simultaneously gutting the funding to the system that supports individuals and families living with mental illness and co-occurring disorders was a step backwards.