

To: CCSI Stakeholders and Other Interested Parties
From: Tyler Spangenberg, CCSI Statewide Director
Subject: CCSI and SPOA Relationship
Date: May 14, 2003

In your work with children and family services systems, you might be asked to explain the difference between the CCSI and the OMH Single Point of Access (SPOA). This memo provides an overview of some of the differences and similarities between the two efforts.

There are two key features to recognize when describing the relationship between the two initiatives:

1. CCSI and SPOA are locally designed and operated based on the structural design, strengths and weaknesses of county service systems and their inter-relationships.
2. The initiatives are intended to be complimentary, not competitive with one another.

Because of the relatively short time that the two initiatives have co-existed, and due to their decidedly local flavor, county systems to coordinate and integrate care for at-risk children and their families are very much a work in progress. What is true today in a given set of counties could be quite different a year -- or even months -- from now. Disclaimers aside, some universal truths:

- CCSI is a cross-systems process for planning treatment for children and families that utilizes strength-based approaches, individualized planning, and encourages creative, flexible decision making and funding strategies.
- SPOA can be viewed as more of a system for managing services.
- SPOA is an Office of Mental Health initiative, while CCSI is a multi-agency collaboration.
- SPOA funding is part of the OMH "New Initiatives" package that was originally enacted with the 2000-2001 State Budget. This initiative has several components for improving children's services that include increasing system capacity, more flexible case management structures, and overall service coordination.
- CCSI is voluntary, but participating counties must create structures and processes that include participants from multiple service systems as well as family/parent representatives.
- CCSI was signed into law in July 2002. The statute sets the parameters for successful cross-systems structures including state and local participants and organizing principles.
- Both initiatives focus on at-risk children who have an emotional disturbance diagnosis.
- CCSI is designed to infuse local decision making processes with a set of core principles for helping children and their families who have needs that cross administrative and service delivery lines.
- CCSIs must be cross-systems in nature; SPOAs should, and most likely will be.

SPOAs should coordinate with pre-existing children's initiatives such as CCSI. As an initiative, the CCSI process can be a component of the SPOA that completes the strength-based service plan and provides the flex or wraparound funds that a child and family needs as the child moves through the SPOA process of accessing and receiving services. The CCSI process is also the vehicle that ensures that the principles of CCSI (the CASSP principles) are infused into the SPOA system to provide individualized, strength-based planning and treatment.

In practice, the relationship between SPOA and CCSI will depend on how local decision-makers choose to organize their systems. There are a broad range of models being developed that in some cases merge the initiatives entirely, while others keep them distinctly separate. No one approach is more or less “correct” – there is enough work for each initiative whether or not they do it together, apart or somewhere in between.

For example:

Westchester County has a long history of integrating its child-serving systems, and the CCSI process and principles are interwoven throughout their infrastructure. In addition to having a Single Point of Access, Westchester has a Single Point of Return committee that focuses on discharge planning.

Erie County has also merged CCSI and SPOA; the CCSI Tier I Committee is the screening team for SPOA.

Orange County’s CCSI project (NETWORK) is also the single point of entry for all high end services.

Wyoming County has closely linked their CCSI and SPOA, with CCSI providing the “backdrop” for collaboration and individualized care. CCSI works directly with families, while SPOA oversees and manages the services.

Schuyler County uses the CCSI process as more of a preventative measure, before the child and family reaches the SPOA.

The CCSI Tier III Committee will continue to monitor the development of local systems, and intends to keep the field up to date on what counties are doing across the state. For now, the best way to understand how localities are designing their systems is to directly reach out to the statewide contacts for the initiatives. These contacts can help answer your questions and put you in touch with counties in your area or that are of particular interest to you.

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