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The Massachusetts Family Networks Implementation Study

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with Jodi Adams, MA, Barnie Gahamnson, MPH, Katherine Wouller, BA, Brinda Waren, BS, UMass

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

MASSACHUSETTS Department of Social Services (MA/DSS) includes local offices located in 39 areas and provides a full range of services to children, youth and families served by the Massachusetts child welfare system. The Family Networks Implementation Study, a partnership between MA/DSS and the University of Massachusetts Medical School, is a comprehensive systems transformation initiative to design and implement local systems of care for children, youth, and families served by the child welfare system.

The Study Overview

The partnership between MA/DSS and UMass is the foundation of the Family Networks Implementation Study. The benefits of active stakeholder involvement are numerous, including increased buy-in to the study process, assistance in identifying key outcomes, and the prioritization of study results (Kafend et al., 1986).

Shared Project Management

- The study is co-managed by MA/DSS and UMass project leads.
- Creation of a Study Design Team (SDT) to pilot the data collection strategy in two Area Offices. The team began collecting stories from a pool of MA/DSS staff and stakeholders through the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. Next steps include the review of stories via active discussion in which significance is explored and success criteria are carefully documented.

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The RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What structures, processes, and conditions influence the implementation of Family Networks?

- What needs to happen over the next 6 to 12 months?
- What has worked so far in the past 6 to 12 months?
- How do we keep our eye on what happening?

RESEARCH METHODS

To identify change domains: Concept Mapping

Participants in a Parent Advisory Team (PAT) to develop a systems transformation blueprint to design and implement local systems of care for children and youth in placement; and approximately 3400 employees (FY2007; 3rd quarter).

Change stories are systematically collected from all MA/DSS staff and stakeholders via SurveyMonkey and are shared on a public website (www.familtnetworks.org) with increased buy-in to the study process, assistance in identifying key outcomes, and the prioritization of study results (Kafend et al., 1986).

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