



# The Same Page



Fall 2002

*Newsletter of the Family Satisfaction Team in Westmoreland County*

## The Westmoreland County Mental Health System



When my child needed mental health services, I didn't know where to turn. I hadn't heard of Westmoreland Casemanagement and Supports, Inc. (WCSI), and I didn't know that there was help out there. Outpatient therapy was the only thing I knew of, and that didn't help much in our case. We muddled through, with little insurance coverage and lots of out-of-pocket expense. If I knew then what I know now, I think the whole experience would have been much less frightening and traumatic. Westmoreland County has a child and adolescent mental health (MH) system that works well in most cases—but first you have to know about it. Many parents we talk to tell us about their initial difficulties in finding and securing services for their children. When we ask them if they feel there are enough MH services, we often hear, "I don't know what's out there."

The answer is not a simple one—the system is somewhat complex and it keeps changing. The list of services goes something like this: case management, family support services, inpatient, outpatient, partial hospitalization, residential treatment facility (RTF), behavioral health rehabilitative services (BHRS) also known as wraparound, family-based therapy, respite, transition, Student Assistance Program (SAP), crisis intervention, therapeutic foster care, and early intervention. We feel we have a good variety of wraparound and outpatient providers, but need more RTF, partial hospitalization, respite, and transition programs. Our advice on navigating the system is to call WCSI at 1-800-353-6467. The WCSI main office is in Greensburg, with satellite offices in New Kensington, Latrobe, and Monessen. They are the designated base service unit for the county. Their intake department provides the point of entry into the mental health, mental retardation, and early intervention services as well as the case management services that they provide which are detailed below. WCSI can help you deal with funding, assessing which services your child may need, and helping to access those services. Services don't always need to be in Westmoreland County.

If your child is a HealthChoices member, they will have Gateway, MedPlus, or Best for their medical insurance coverage, and Value Behavioral Health (VBH) will cover the behavioral services. VBH or WCSI can refer HealthChoices members to MH providers. VBH can be reached by calling 1-877-688-5977. Below is a quick summary of the MH services; WCSI and VBH have lists naming the individual providers.

**Case Management:** While WCSI is not the only provider of this service, it is the largest. They provide three levels of case management: Administrative for minimal/basic needs, Resource Coordination for intermediate needs, and Intensive for more complex needs which includes 24-hour on-call availability. The services include but are not limited to: identifying and accessing resources, providing assessments, service planning, providing crisis intervention and prevention, and maintaining contact with providers and clients.

**Inpatient:** A stay in the mental health unit of area hospitals, typically those in Westmoreland or Allegheny County. It's great to know you can take your child to the emergency room if necessary.

**Family Satisfaction Team**  
The **FAMILY** plays an important role in the maintenance of quality mental health services.

We want to know about your overall **SATISFACTION** with the services your child receives.

As a **TEAM**, we work with you to ensure quality services for your children.





**The FAMILY SATISFACTION TEAM** interviews families of children receiving mental health services. These meetings are free, anonymous, and confidential. We can meet you at your child's facility, our office, or where most convenient for you.

**For help call:**

**WCSI**  
1-800-353-6467  
**VBH**  
1-877-688-5977  
**Crisis Hotline**  
1-800-836-6010  
**Help Line**  
1-800-222-8848

**To call for FST information, or to schedule an interview:**  
**1-724-834-6351**  
**Out of area calls:**  
**1-800-871-4445**



**Mental Health Association**

**Outpatient:** Meeting with a psychiatrist and/or a therapist on a regular basis throughout the treatment period. The psychiatrist does an assessment initially then follows with shorter “med checks” to change or adjust medication as necessary, if medication is prescribed. The psychiatrist might also prescribe services, such as outpatient therapy or partial hospitalization, which for children and adolescents includes an educational program.

**Partial Hospitalization:** The child or adolescent attends a special school with individual and group therapy along with psychiatric care. There are two of these programs in our county.

**RTF-Residential Treatment Facilities:** The child or adolescent lives in a structured group home. Related to this is therapeutic foster care where the foster parents have received training. Often Westmoreland County kids go to RTFs in Allegheny or other counties.

**BHRS-Behavioral Health Rehab Services (Wraparound):** A treatment team works with the child and family at home and/or at school to treat maladaptive behaviors. This is often used with children diagnosed with autism or ADHD, but it is not limited to those. There are many providers to choose from in Westmoreland County.

**Family-Based:** A team of therapists comes into the home to give family therapy where a child has a mental health diagnosis. Treatment is for up to eight months. Currently two providers are offering this service.

**Respite:** The child or adolescent is housed in a therapeutic setting on a voluntary, short-term basis.

**Transition:** There are several programs which are aimed at those who are becoming adults. These programs assist in housing, educational, vocational, and other needs of that population.

**SAP-Student Assistance Program:** This program takes place in the schools. Teachers or other school personnel who are part of the SAP team identify children and adolescents who may need mental health services.

**Crisis Intervention:** Westmoreland Human Opportunities has a crisis hotline and mobile crisis intervention. Both can be reached at *1-800-836-6010*.

The Health and Welfare Council publishes a list of services that can be found at the Greensburg Library. The phone numbers for hotlines and some services can be found in the human services section of the phone book. Also, Westmoreland County has a Help Line for information and referral at *1-800-222-8848*.

While this is not a comprehensive list of all the services available, hopefully it gives some sense of what's there. It's not a perfect system, but it's made all the difference to many children and their families.

*-Beth Crofutt and Rita McWilliams*

We provide the opportunity for you to freely share your thoughts and concerns about your child's services with parents who know what it's like. (We too, have had children in the mental health system.) Your information will be anonymously included in our report, which is used by the Westmoreland County MH/MR, Value Behavioral Health, and the Mental Health Association in the evaluation and improvement of services.

**Your voice counts!**

