

The Bernalillo County Behavioral Health Initiative

Filling the Gaps + Connecting the Dots

What Is It?

The Bernalillo County Behavioral Health Initiative represents a significant step forward in local efforts toward addressing and preventing the mental health, substance abuse, addiction, and homelessness crisis in Albuquerque/Bernalillo County and the middle Rio Grande region of New Mexico.

Recent studies suggest that nearly 50 percent of Bernalillo County residents needing mental health or addiction treatment services are not getting the help they need because of gaps in New Mexico's behavioral health care. Untreated behavioral health conditions have led to increased and sometimes tragic interactions with law enforcement, over incarceration, overuse of hospital emergency and inpatient services, and unnecessary suffering on the part of patients and their families.

In 2014, a task force that included elected representatives of Bernalillo County, the City of Albuquerque, State of New Mexico, consumers, providers, and other stakeholders worked to identify behavioral healthcare gaps, needs, and priorities in Bernalillo County. In October 2014, the task force made formal recommendations to the Bernalillo County Commission, which include the need for a regional crisis stabilization center, intensive case management, supportive housing, the creation of community engagement teams, and mobile crisis units. Click here to see the [City/County Behavioral Health Task Force Recommendations](#).

The Bernalillo County Behavioral Health Initiative launched in response to the needs identified by this task force and the many others who have studied these needs over the past 20 years, and with the support of Bernalillo County voters who overwhelmingly expressed support for such action during the 2014 general election when asked:

“Are you in favor of the Bernalillo County Commission establishing a one-eighth percent gross receipts tax to be used for the purpose of providing more mental and behavioral health services for adults and children in the Albuquerque and Bernalillo County area, to provide a safety net system that develops continuum of care not otherwise funded in New Mexico?”

2014 General Election Results

Given the need, widespread support and call for action on this issue, the Board of Bernalillo County Commissioners, on Feb. 26, 2015, imposed a one-eighth percent gross receipts tax to improve access to mental and behavioral health care services in the county. The tax is expected to generate approximately \$20 million annually. The

County Commission imposed the one-eighth percent tax based on a state law granting local governments the legal authority to impose the tax in order to recoup the loss of hold harmless gross receipt payments that local governments would no longer be receiving from the State of New Mexico. Click here to read "[Commission Approves Mental Health Measure.](#)" Click here to see [2014 General Election Results](#). Click here to see the statute [County Hold Harmless Gross Receipt Tax](#).

Recognizing that Bernalillo County is not alone when it comes to trying to meet the needs of some of its most vulnerable citizens who struggle with homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders, the Bernalillo County Board of County Commissioners also unanimously approved a resolution that calls for working toward the development of a unified and collaborative behavioral health system; and, in April of 2015 the board approved the creation of a resource development work group to bring together governmental, nonprofit, and private sector behavioral health funders to explore opportunities for collaboration and alignment of resources. Click here to read [Administrative Resolution - Unified and Coordinated Behavioral Health System](#). Click here to read [Administrative Resolution – Behavioral Health Resource Development Work Group](#).

Goal: A Comprehensive, Well-Networked, and Accessible Continuum of Behavioral Health Care:

The goal of the Bernalillo County Behavioral Health Initiative is to develop a comprehensive, well networked, and accessible continuum of care for children, youth, and adults in need of behavioral health services--from prevention through education and early intervention, to crisis response and long term stabilization--by working in partnership with members of the New Mexico congressional delegation, federal agencies, the State of New Mexico, local and regional governments, and private and nonprofit sector agencies to establish a shared vision and priorities, identify opportunities for collaboration, alignment and leveraging of resources to maximize the collective impact.

Task Force Recommendations:

Bernalillo County's behavioral health professionals, community members, and elected officials have been working on behavioral health challenges facing the community for over a decade. Since 2002, a number of reports have been completed by various task forces that sought to define the problem and make recommended solutions.

The most recent recommendations from the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Behavioral Health Task Force of 2014 are consistent with recommendations made by other task forces since 2002.

- Click here to read [Recommendations of City/County Task Force on Behavioral Health 2014](#).
- Click here to read the [House Joint Memorial 17 Task Force Recommendations/2011](#).
- Click here to read [City of Albuquerque Crisis Triage Services Consultant Recommendations/2004](#).
- Click here to read [Behavioral Health Needs and Gaps 2002 Executive Summary](#).

The Most Recent Set of Recommendations Include:

A crisis stabilization/response center, intensive case management, creation of community engagement teams, supportive housing for people with mental or behavioral health conditions, mobile crisis units, reforms to the criminal justice system, utilization of Medicaid, and prevention programs.

How Will We Get There? Collaborating for Collective Impact

With revenue generated by the one-eighth percent gross receipts tax, and an understanding of priority needs, gaps in services, and the various complicating factors that have led to the current state of affairs, Bernalillo County has hired a consultant agency, Community Partners, Inc. (CPI), to assist and advise the community through the development of a behavioral health system business plan on the changes and reforms that would be needed to achieve our goal of a comprehensive, well-networked, and accessible continuum of care. This includes taking into account and analyzing past and current research done on the behavioral health system, meeting with stakeholders to verify those findings and to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and factors involved, identifying opportunities for partnership, collaboration, and alignment of resources by facilitating meetings of the Resource Development Work Group.

What is the Role of Community Partners, Inc.?

In February 2015, the Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners approved a one-eighth percent gross receipts tax expected to generate approximately \$20 million each year for the purposes of improving access and services to the behavioral health system in Bernalillo County. In April 2015, the commission, through the county's Request for Proposal process, selected and contracted with Community Partners Inc. (CPI), a Tucson-based company, to develop a comprehensive behavioral health business plan. Click here to read [Bernalillo County's contract with Community Partners Inc.](#)

CPI has more than 20 years of experience in creating and managing the public behavioral health care system in southern Arizona. CPI created a crisis response center and lead Southern Arizona in the transformation of its crisis care system to provide quality accessible and coordinated services in both hospital and community settings. CPI has managed multiple funding streams, monitored systems and services, and was charged with ensuring the quality of care for approximately 1 million individuals living in Tucson and Pima County Arizona.

For Bernalillo County, CPI will utilize its expertise to assist the county and its partners with creating the necessary infrastructure to support the community's goal of designing and implementing a comprehensive, well-networked, accessible continuum of care in the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County and middle Rio Grande region of New Mexico.

How Will it Work?

Community Partners, Inc. (CPI) will complete its work in four phases. The services include, but are not limited to the following:

Phase 1

CPI will create a preliminary plan on behavioral health and present the plan to the county manager and Board of County Commissioners no later than June 1, 2015. Click here to read the [Phase 1 Preliminary Plan on Behavioral Health](#).

The preliminary plan will at minimum includes the following:

1. An administrative structure for the purposes of the county receiving, administering, monitoring and overseeing behavioral health funds.
2. Identify priority populations, priority services, resources and estimated amounts for each service category.
3. Outline of a behavioral health business plan.
4. Reviewing prior reports and recommendations and other written materials related to the behavioral health system needs, plans and interventions in Bernalillo County and the State of New Mexico.
5. Identify and meet with key community stakeholders, identified by CPI and the county to gain input on service needs for a comprehensive behavioral health system in Bernalillo County.

Phase 2

CPI will create a comprehensive behavioral health business plan to present to the county manager and Board of County Commissioners no later than Dec.1, 2015. The comprehensive behavioral health business plan will include input from key community stakeholders, providers, and advocates. The plan will also include an evaluation of current state and local resources, and will at minimum include a detailed design and costs for the following:

1. An administrative structure for the purposes of the county receiving, administering, monitoring and overseeing behavioral health funds.
2. Development and oversight of provider standards and monitoring and compliance with provider agreements.
3. Behavioral health service delivery structure for youth and adults in Bernalillo County, which will at minimum include the following:

- Prevention and Education
- Crisis Triage Stabilization
- Community Engagement Teams
- Mobile Crisis Teams
- Crisis Lines
- Respite Services
- In-Patient Treatment and Step down Services
- Variety of Out-Patient Services
- Case Management and Peer Support
- Housing Needs and Options
- Criminal Justice Systems
- Funding Options, Billing and Reimbursements

CPI will further develop and define a plan for a comprehensive, cohesive and cost-effective behavioral health system for the residents of Bernalillo County and surrounding areas. In Phase 2, CPI will meet with key elected officials, leaders of neighboring counties, consumers, families, advocates community leaders, state and local governments and providers to gain input in the development of the business plan. Some of the Phase 2 activities include:

1. Focus on partnering with community leaders to leverage opportunities to establish a centralized crisis and command center.
2. Gather more information on the need for additional detoxification services.
3. Assess crisis respite as a need service component and explore opportunities to fast-track development of this capacity for the community.
4. Explore needs for advocacy and support services for consumers and families.
5. Focus more on the unique behavioral health needs of other populations, including the Hispanic and Native American population and other groups defined by race or ethnicity.
6. Work with local leaders in the housing services to better understand the current and projected housing needs of the community and to formulate a plan to enhance these services.
7. Determine options for early detection and treatment of first-episode psychosis.
8. Explore prevention/early intervention services and programs in schools to seek opportunities to expand; and, look into prevention services for IV drug users and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual or queer or questioning.

Phase 3

A due date to complete Phase 3 has not been established. CPI will provide the following services:

1. Create and oversee a process to obtain community input on the behavioral health business plan including the development of a crisis triage, stabilization, and respite services. CPI will seek/include input from behavioral health providers, criminal justice stakeholders, governmental entities, consumers and family members, advocacy organizations, law enforcement and other first responders and persons involved in task forces and/or committees that have assessed the need for such a facility.
2. Review prior reports and recommendations and other written material related to the possible development of a crisis triage, stabilization, and respite facility in Bernalillo County.
3. Analyze funding opportunities in all areas of the behavioral health business plan under the current Medicaid and MCO (managed care organization) funding structure and assess additional potential Medicaid, grant and/or private funding opportunities that would be available with state administrative action.
4. Review national best practice models for crisis triage stabilization facilities and identify model facilities in comparable locations for review in the development process.

5. Identify and seek sources of funding from city, county, state governments, and private entities for the county to provide start-up and/or operations funding for the behavioral health business plan including the crisis stabilization facility.
6. Identify any licensing, certifications or regulatory requirements that would apply to such a facility in New Mexico and Bernalillo County.
7. Work with adjoining counties who would like to participate in the Bernalillo County behavioral health services and establish out-of-county funding and billing mechanisms.
8. If a crisis triage stabilization facility and respite services are determined necessary, CPI will work with stakeholders to develop a detailed plan for a crisis triage, stabilization, and respite facility which will include at minimum the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation, Capacity • Size, Population Served • Access to Services • Client Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission Criteria and Process • Discharge Planning and Discharge Process • Staffing, Budget, and all Other Aspects Related to the Start-Up and Operation of the Facility.
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Phase 4

Phase 4 is not part of the current CPI contract. Phase 4 would focus on future phases of work that may need to be planned and funded to implement the business plan that's being developed through the current contract.

[ABCGC PowerPoint Presentation - March 31, 2016](#)

[Bernalillo County Behavioral Health Business Plan](#)

[Bernalillo County Healthcare Task Force Recommendations 2014](#)

[Commission Approves Mental Health Measure](#)

[2014 General Election Results](#)

[County Hold Harmless Gross Receipt Tax](#)

[Administrative Resolution - Unified and Coordinated Behavioral Health System](#)

[Administrative Resolution - Behavioral Health Resource Development Work Group](#)

[House Memorial 17 Task Force Recommendations 2011](#)

[City of Albuquerque Crisis Triage Services Consultant Recommendations 2004](#)

[Behavioral Health Needs and Gaps 2002 Executive Summary](#)

[Recommendations of City/County Task Force on Behavioral Health 2014](#)

[Contract with Community Partners, Inc.](#)

[Phase 1 Preliminary Plan on Behavioral Health](#)