

FAQ:

All About the Services and Costs Study

What is the Services and Costs Study?

The Services and Costs Study is a core study of the National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program. Approval of this study is expected in September or October 2009. When this is received, sharing data with the national evaluation will be required of the Harris County Systems of Hope project and other funded projects. The study addresses questions about what services are used by children and families, how much do these services cost, and who pays for these services.

Is this the same as tracking flexible funds?

No, flexible funds are tracked through a separate database (the “Flex Funds tool). This study/ information collection requirement goes beyond flexible funds to document the overall services and costs for families/ youth in the SOH evaluation.

What data should be collected?

We will need to collect:

- # Program budget data (this is already being captured)
- # Flexible fund expenditures (this is already being captured)
- # Mental health services and cost data and services and costs data from system of care agencies (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice, education, etc.) **This information may or may be not currently captured or may be in various different information systems.**

What information needs to be collected?

Data are collected at the child/ case level, **one record per child per service episode.**

- # Child ID or name (the evaluation team will provide the ID)
- # Dates of Service
- # Type of Service (e.g. case management, therapy, medication monitoring, probation contact, therapeutic group home, foster care, caregiver support.)
- # Type of Agency Providing Service (e.g. mental health, social services, juvenile justice, education)
- # Type of Individuals Providing Service (e.g. case manager, teacher, probation officer, volunteer, etc.)
- # Location of Service (e.g. office, clinic, inpatient psychiatric facility, home, group home, etc)
- # Number of Service Units
- # Service Unit Description (e.g. minutes, hours, days, weeks, visits, etc.)
- # Cost of Service (i.e. cost of the service and who it was charged to, e.g. Medicaid, SOH grant, private insurance, etc.)
- # Amount of Payment (i.e. how much was paid for the service and who paid it)
- # Estimation of value of service if provided by informal supports or volunteers

For which children/youth should data be collected?

The evaluation team will indicate which children/ youth for which data will be needed.

For what time period should services and costs data be collected?

This should be documented from the times the youth/family were enrolled into SOH.

What will we need to do to implement this study?

We will need your help in getting a records management or management information systems contact person from your agency who can help us with this task.