

SAMHSA Family Grant for Montana

Montana has received a Statewide Families Grant through SAMHSA for the 2008 fiscal year. The purpose of this grant is to provide a mechanism (SPAR) by which families with a child with mental illness will work with the state's System of Care Planning Committee to assess their local area's mental health service delivery system. Through Family Support Network and other support agencies, families will receive training on system values and principles, development of a knowledge base to accurately assess current mental health system delivery in their area, information on current state and local area SOC development efforts and methods of effective communication.

Through this project, Family Support Network and other support agencies plan to build a system of parent councils throughout the state to provide a forum for families who have a child with mental illness. These families will help families with similar circumstances or histories to become involved in directing the delivery of services for their families. These parent groups will provide a system where information, support and joint resolve can be channeled for maximum impact on further state development of a cohesive mental health delivery system that is child centered and family driven. By having a team of parents involved in the various service regions, families have a better opportunity to have their voices heard at state meetings, legislative committees and by local officials. The information obtained by having many parents involved in the process of assessing their local areas will allow the state to better direct and coordinate their resources for long-term planning.

This letter is an invitation to parents, youth and family members to participate in local parent councils to provide the state with an on-going assessment of the progress toward family driven, child centered mental health care and an invitation to support agencies, providers and state system of care personnel to lend support, assistance and training to help families get their voices heard.