

Erie County: Systemic Collaboration to Reduce Urgent Care

In May of 2017, the Erie County Department of Mental Health (ECDMH), under the leadership of John Grieco, Assistant Commissioner/Planning and Analysis, partnered with [CCSI's Center for Collaboration in Community Health](#) on the Erie PSYCKES Project, with the goal of reducing the use of acute services (Emergency Room, behavioral health hospitalizations and re-hospitalizations) for clients treated in the behavioral health community. This project uses the acute service utilization data available in the Psychiatric Services and Clinical Knowledge Enhancement System ([PSYCKES](#)), a web-based tool developed by the New York State Office of Mental Health (NYS OMH), that uses administrative data from the NYS Medicaid claims database to generate quality indicators and summarize treatment histories. PSYCKES data are used to inform effective interventions at the client, program, agency, and system levels and to help clients get their needs met at lower levels of care. The main features of the Erie PSYCKES project include the Erie PSYCKES Tool which offers a visual representation of acute service utilization data from PSYCKES in a, secure, easy to understand, interactive web-based data dashboard. The Erie PSYCKES Tool has been the focal point of the project's multi-stakeholder group meetings attended by organizations involved in many facets of care, as well as a separate collaborative effort between four behavioral health agencies working together to share best practice approaches to reducing the use of acute services for their clients.

As the Local Government Unit (LGU), the Erie County Department of Mental Health is responsible for the overall health of the community and the oversight of local behavioral health providers. ECDMH has utilized this role to give something back to the community in the form of the Erie PSYCKES Tool. CCSI's Center Team constructed this web-based data dashboard tool that is easily accessible and makes understanding data quick and easy. All local stakeholders had access to visualized reports on the acute service utilization data at the state, region, county, and program levels. The Erie County behavioral health agencies can access this Tool to see how their outpatient mental health, substance use, PROS, ACT, and Health Home programs are trending in regard to key PSYCKES indicators. The Erie PSYCKES Tool data set shows visualized trends for multiple Emergency Room visits, repeated behavioral health hospitalizations, and re-hospitalizations within 30-days. Each of these indicators is likely to be important as providers consider the Value Based Payment contracts they will enter into with Managed Care Organizations in the near future. To use the Erie PSYCKES Tool, providers simply request access to this performance data which gives them an opportunity to understand their current trends, establish baselines, and set targets for improvement.

ECDMH has featured the Erie PSYCKES Tool in meetings with organizations attended by stakeholders across the behavioral healthcare system. These data-driven "large group" meetings have been attended by multiple stakeholders, including: behavioral health agencies, the RHIO (HEALTHeLINK), DSRIIPS (Millennium and the Community Partners of Western New York), and Health Home/Care Management providers. By convening these large stakeholder meetings, ECDMH has provided opportunities for participants to make important systemic connections; both the strengthening of technical connections and through relationship building with organizations that have similar goals. Participants are encouraged to share their multi-level technological and clinical interventions aimed at reducing the use of acute services by the populations they serve.

The Erie County PSYCKES project has also led to the formation of the Erie PSYCKES Collaborative. Four behavioral health agencies (BestSelf, Buffalo Psychiatric Center, Catholic Charities, and Endeavor) are

utilizing the Erie PSYCKES Tool to take a deeper dive into this data set to better understand how to effectively intervene to reduce the use of acute services. This collaborative approach is focusing on the most recent “New Flag” data for these acute service indicators and agencies then share information about client-level interventions that meet client needs at lower levels of care with the group. The Erie Collaborative group also shares effective CQI practice tips and lessons learned with the larger Erie PSYCKES group.

Through the Erie PSYCKES project, the ECDMH continues to model how LGUs can convene local systems and stakeholders to support practice change and improve outcomes for individuals treated in our behavioral health system. Though reducing the use of acute services for an entire county is an ambitious goal, the efforts of Erie County agencies have already shown some promising results as hospitalizations and re-hospitalizations for ACT, PROS, and youth involved in the behavioral health system are trending lower in 2018 as compared to 2017. CCSI is excited to continue this work with ECDMH and the Erie County providers as we strive to bring systems together to forge data-driven solutions. To talk more about how your organization can best utilize PSYCKES data, please contact [Dave Eckert](#), Senior Consultant, CCSI’s Center for Collaboration in Community Health.