

TAILORED BENCHMARKING INITIATIVES

Overview Behavioral Pathway Systems (BPS) partners with national and state behavioral health and human services provider associations to offer affordable, tailored benchmarking initiatives. Collaborative relationships exist with organizations such as the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, Mental Health Corporations of America (MHCA), The Alliance for Children and Families, Pennsylvania Community Providers Association (PCPA), New Jersey Association of Community Mental Health Agencies (NJAMHA), the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards, the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA) and others. What follows is a description of an association-driven benchmarking initiative.

Rationale A thermometer would be of limited value as a measure of one's health if it were not known that 98.6 is normal. Similarly, measures of organizational performance are of limited value since they generally lack a context. Comparative benchmarking brings new meaning to performance measurement by providing that vital context. Benchmarking data also provides information that can be used by the Florida Council for Community Mental Health for advocacy purposes. Finally, benchmarking can be expected to meaningfully enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of participating organizations.

Business Model BPS assumes all financial risks in its benchmarking collaborations. The initiative would be branded under the co-sponsor's name in concert with BPS and the project would be promoted by the association to its members. BPS would contribute its extensive experience and technical resources to the enterprise. BPS would manage the logistics, obviating the need for the sponsoring association to allocate staffing resources. Governance would be shared by the association and BPS. The annual subscription fee would fall somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1,000 per participating organization, depending upon the exact needs and specifications of the initiative. The fee is typically paid by each participating organization but, if preferred, the association can assume the role of the payor in return for a discount.

Benchmark Selection Benchmarks are tailored to the needs of the members of the sponsoring provider association. They are selected by a Steering Committee composed of participants, guided by a statewide survey that would be conducted by BPS. Selections generally span the clinical, operational, financial and organizational climate realms of performance. Operational definitions can either be drawn from the extensive field-tested BPS national repository or customized around state practices or requirements. Metrics typically reflect data already being collected to minimize any burden upon the organization.

Data Submission Aggregated quarterly data is typically submitted to BPS via a user-friendly, secure, encrypted, confidential on-line survey. State-of the-art validation protocols help ensure the integrity and validity of the data collected. Separate submissions can be established for an unlimited number of satellite locations, resulting in separate reports at no additional cost.

Reports A variety of comparative benchmarking reports is produced, featuring a wealth of normative data and comparisons between the participating organization and "local" norms. National comparisons are also provided, as applicable. Easy-to-understand percentile rankings clearly communicate areas of comparative organizational strength and opportunities for improvement. Furthermore, "apples-to-apples" peer group comparisons are offered to ensure that like organizations are compared with one another. All reports are strictly confidential and an organization's individual data is never made available to any other organization or entity, including the co-sponsoring association.

Process Benchmarking A unique feature of BPS benchmarking initiatives is the availability of process benchmarking. Pioneered by BPS, process benchmarking uses benchmarking data to identify potential best practices in selected areas of interest such as outpatient productivity, staff retention, access, and no-shows. Through process benchmarking, participants learn about the powerful and often little-known methods that distinguish top performers from others.

User Support All participants attend a telephonic orientation to the benchmarking initiative. Ongoing user support is readily available via email or telephone. Monthly audio-conferences invite discussion about timely topics and the opportunity to learn from "top performers". Monthly newsletters also serve to inform and educate. Other free resources are also made available. Significant efforts are extended to provide opportunities for participants to learn from one another on an ongoing basis.

Summary BPS is the industry leader in behavioral health and human services benchmarking. Through a collaborative venture with BPS, a state provider association can bring a tailored, state-of-the-art, comprehensive benchmarking system to its members that is highly affordable--- a significant membership benefit. In these financially challenging times, benchmarking represents a powerful management tool that can greatly assist an association's members survive financially and achieve organizational excellence.

For further information, call 877-330-9870 or write to info@bpsys.org.