

State-County Results Accountability Redesign

AMC AND MACSSA MEMBER SURVEY

Summary of Results

September 14, 2009

Background:

Following the July 13 videoconference on Human Services Redesign, AMC and MACSA surveyed county members regarding their views on establishing a Service Delivery Authority, steps they had taken toward this end, and steps AMC could take to assist counties in implementing the Human Services Redesign intent. The survey was intended to provide information on where counties stand in considering changes to their human services system and help target AMC's efforts in this area. The survey was sent to county human service directors, county administrators and coordinators, and county commissioners.

Response:

A total of 60 out of the 87 counties responded to the survey.

A summary of the written comments is below. In cases where the question provided an opportunity for respondents to among several options, this information is displayed in bar graph form.

Question: What do you see as the potential benefits to your county of establishing a service delivery authority?

As indicated by the bar graph, the large majority of respondents indicated that have formed a working or exploratory group with other counties to consider whether/how to participate as an SDA. A lesser cohort indicated that their board has begun discussions.

In the open-ended responses, most frequently mentioned benefits included:

- Flexibility/waivers from waivers that would allow for improved service
- Improved outcomes
- Opportunity for more locally defined services
- Improved economies of scale, ability to benefit from specialized expertise (some areas mentioned included detox facilities, juvenile corrections and community mental health centers, with increased potential for sharing community health, community corrections, and information technology)
- Positioning to provide good services under increased budget constraints
- Consistency of service for the consumer
- Single point of responsibility among counties
- Clearer access for clients
- Clearer and more open communication with DHS

Several counties indicated that they either could not see any advantage for their counties or that it was difficult to say at this point what the advantage would be over collaborating through some other arrangement. Several counties indicated that they were unclear if there would be benefits until they saw the completed performance standards. Concern was also expressed that larger geographic areas would result in loss of efficiency.

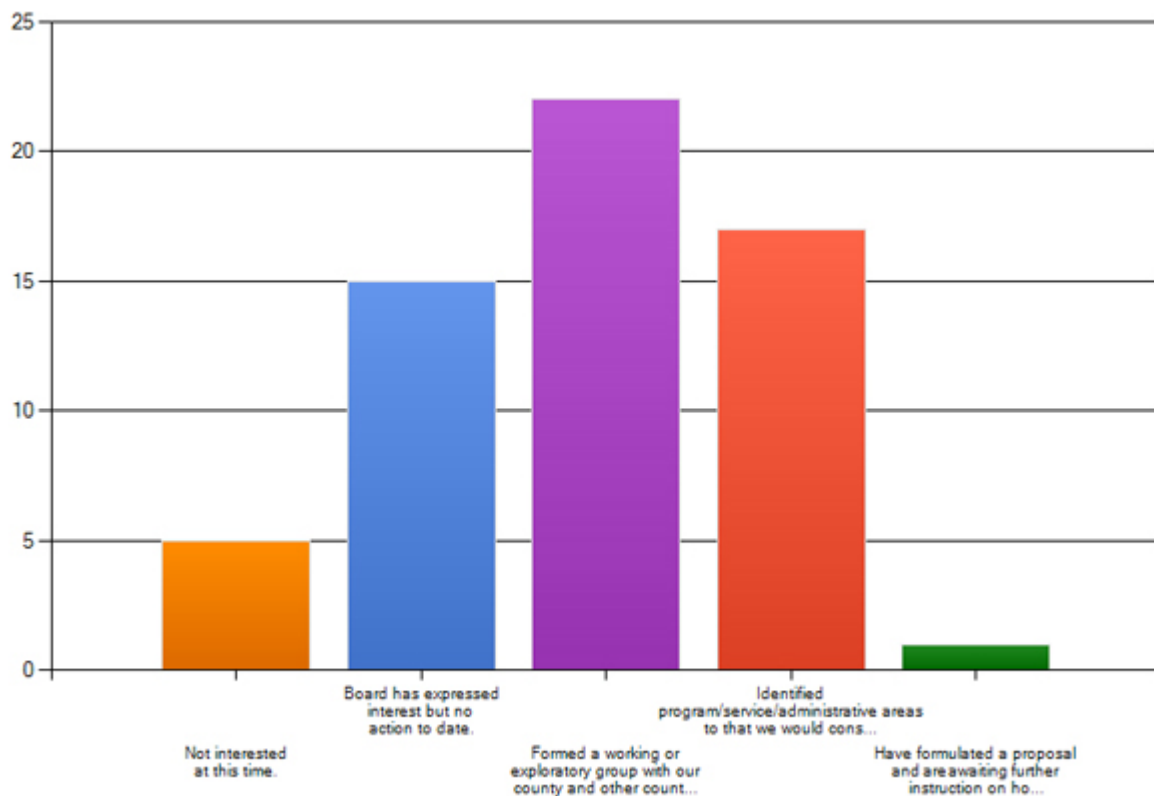
Question: What do you see as obstacles to creating a service delivery authority?

Open-ended responses ranged from the pragmatic, such as financial and contractual concerns, to very personal concerns such as personalities and ‘turf’. The following comments were noted by several respondents:

- Unclear definitions of results and accountability requirements
- Differing priorities related to needed flexibility
- Local political issues, negative history, and leadership issues (differing levels of readiness to proceed)
- Varying levels of interest at the local level
- More “windshield time” due to distance from neighboring counties
- Equitable distribution of funding, administrative structures, salaries, union issues, and technology differences
- Turf, personalities, and trust among counties
- Complacency with the status quo
- Trust in the DHS partnership
- Lack of support from DHS
- Loss of identity, especially of larger counties by smaller counties
- Few resources for collaboration
- Concern over having responsibility for counties with high needs and few resources
- Lack of engagement by local elected officials

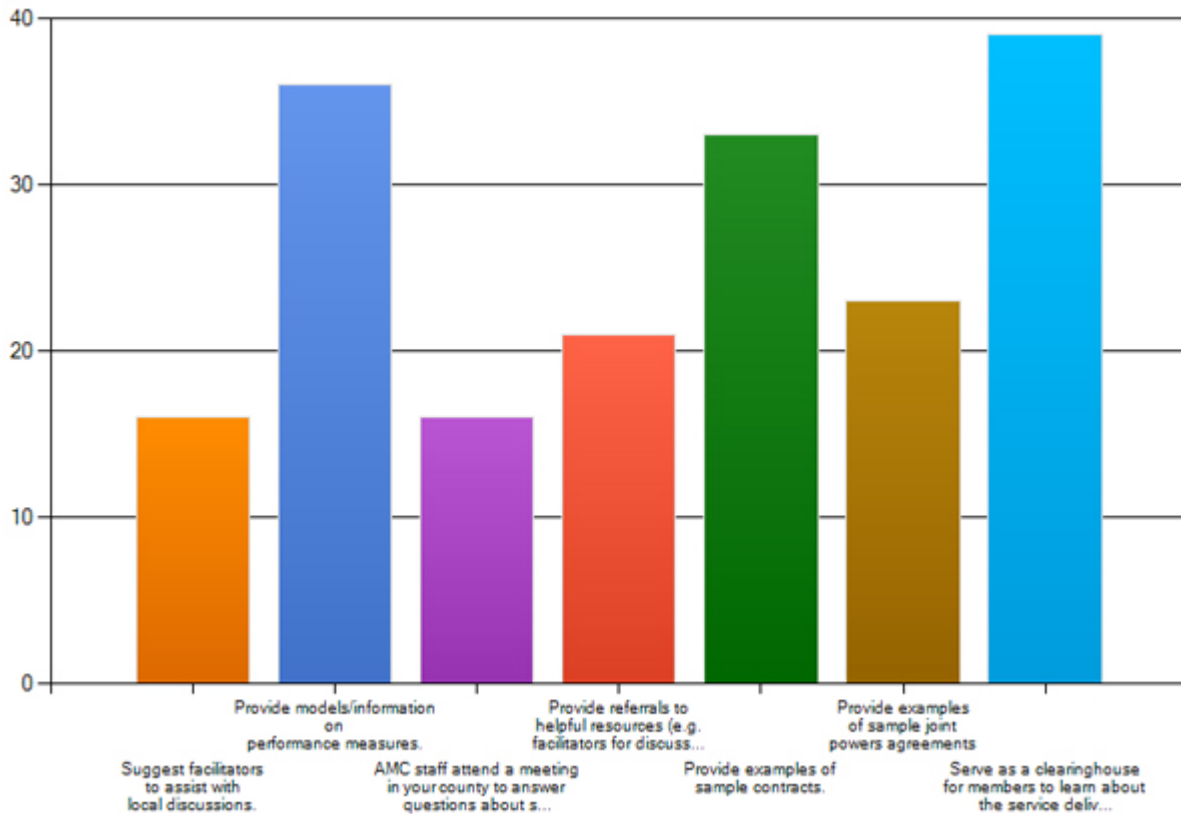
Question: What actions, if any, has your county taken regarding establishment of a service delivery authority?

The bar graphs below indicate responses to each of the options presented. As indicated, the most common step was having formed a working or exploratory group with other counties. In addition, many county respondents offered additional comments. Many said they are just starting conversations, but some indicated that they had been working regionally on multicounty redesign of certain services. Several human services directors indicated that their boards had asked for and received briefings or participated in discussions.



Question: How can AMC facilitate a better understanding of the implementation of SDAs in your county?

The bar graph below shows responses from the options presented. The most common responses were A) serve as a clearinghouse for members to learn about service delivery options and B) provide models/information on performance measures.



Comments addressed a wide range of suggestions in addition to the multiple choice options. Several respondents strongly indicated that AMC should push for a broader view of performance management, focused on improved outcomes and addressing the entire system, including information systems to support this, rather than merely performance measurement. Several also indicated that AMC should 'push' DHS to seriously commit to the Redesign. Some also said that AMC needs to keep commissioners informed and engaged, including counties that are reluctant to look at Redesign. More specific suggestions including communicating via ITV, establishing a centralized web link as a repository for information, and providing training and facilitation in how to bring about change in organizations. One respondent indicated that incentives are needed for Redesign to happen.