

MoHealthWINS Evaluation
Progress Report #2:
Grant Process, Implementation,
Progress and Outcome Update

Prepared December 17, 2012



Executive Summary, Evaluation Progress Report #2: December 14, 2012

- The MoHealthWINs Consortium and its member colleges have made significant progress in Year 1. Although participant enrollment is less than expected (current enrollment stands at 8% of final target), the Consortium has created a solid Statewide foundation to launch additional programs and significantly increase enrollment during the Spring 2013 term.
- The Consortium and its member colleges should be commended for serving participants that match the designated grant target population. The fact that colleges are providing access to higher education for low-skilled adults in a substantial manner is impressive.
- Delayed program implementation has resulted in the slow expenditure of grant funds. Colleges, with delayed program implementation, low enrollment and limited grant expenditures should take immediate steps to increase activity in all areas prior to March 1, 2013.
- Organizational change and innovation often face initial challenges. The Consortium has supported member colleges in their efforts to launch new/innovative programs and strategies and build capacity to expand such efforts.
- Statewide cooperation and partnerships related to “key paradigm shifts” in contextualized and accelerated developmental education; credit for prior learning; non-credit to credit bridges; stackable credentials; and expansion of on-line learning opportunities are progressing.
- Under the current Executive Leadership of Ms. Dawn Busick, MHW is well positioned to move forward. All DOL reporting and compliance documentation was submitted on time and DOL’s first site audit was successfully completed.
- The MHW Third Party Evaluator has noted that member colleges are eager to participate in both DOL and college specific data collection and research. Although member colleges feel confident in current data collection and evaluation processes, they would benefit from additional consultation and staff development aimed at developing strategy-specific evaluation questions.

Introduction

This document is the second in a series of Evaluation Progress Reports (EPR) compiled by Cosgrove & Associates (C&A) and covers the period from June 1, 2012 to December 15, 2012. The EPR series is designed to assist the MoHealthWINS (MHW) Consortium and member colleges closely monitor grant processes, implementation, progress, and performance measures. By working closely with the Grant Team and member colleges, our goal is to help document effective strategies and programs and use evaluation data to help transition successful innovations into mainstream and sustainable practices. Consistent with the evaluation framework provided by C&A, this document summarizes our findings in the following key areas: Process, Implementation, Progress, and Performance Outcomes.

Grant Processes Update

MoHealthWINS continues to benefit from the outstanding executive leadership provided by Ms. Dawn Busick. Ms. Busick's expertise and leadership consistently help the Consortium and member colleges move forward with the following grant processes: MOU negotiations and development; inter-agency and employer partnerships; DOL site visits and related findings; adherence to DOL procedural and reporting guidelines; program implementation; faculty/staff development; information sharing with key statewide stakeholders; engagement with national stakeholders to share best practices and learn from other Round 1 grantees; grant modifications procedure; non-performance procedure; and overall grant management and oversight. Key findings for this area are highlighted below.

- Successful DOL Audit/Site Visit Completed. DOL results used to improve grant processes related to: MOU development; participant SSN acquisition; quarterly reporting; and grant modification and possible non-performance procedures.
- Successful MHW, Fall 2012 campus site visits.
- Developed MHW "Dashboard" data/information and shared MHW data and progress measures with MCCA Presidents and Chancellors.
- Successful faculty and staff development training sessions.
- Successful sharing of MHW processes on a national level. MoHealthWINS grant management processes have received national attention from DOL; Mathematica, Complete College America, and The Gates Foundation. In addition, the Executive Director routinely reaches out to other Round 1 grantees to share and learn best practices.
- Adoption of Evaluation Logic Model to assist member colleges in "Doing The Crosswalk" to more fully understand the relationship between/among grant priorities, programs, strategies and targeted outcomes.

- DOL approval of the MHW participant and comparison cohort, quasi-experimental evaluation design.

Grant Program Implementation Update

As of December 1st, 20 of the 31 MHW programs have been launched and 11 percent of grant funds have been expended. Current MHW enrollment stands at 275. This figure represents eight percent of the targeted enrollment of 3,539. Seventy-eight percent of the participants are female. Sixty-eight percent are white and 32 percent are minority. Ninety percent of the participants reported being either unemployed or “under-employed” at initial enrollment. Eighty-seven percent of the participants are non-college ready in at least one area (English, mathematics or reading). The average age of the participants is 37. Six percent (18 individuals) are classified as TAA eligible. The fact that MHW programs are attempting to reach low skilled, adults in a substantial manner is impressive. This target population presents a variety of challenges, yet their success is critical to social and economic development. MHW efforts regarding this population should be acknowledged and applauded.

During the past six months, the Grant Team has provided extensive support to member colleges in an effort to ensure program implementation and assist in moving from planned activities to actual start-up. Such support included: two rounds of campus site visits; technical and programmatic assistance in mapping programs of study; regional staff development and training sessions related to grant processes and data collection requirements; three full days of training during the MCCA Statewide conference; college partner meetings to resolve MOU and partnership issues between member colleges; and customized, one-on-one consultation to help colleges identify the relationships between planned strategies, program design and targeted outcomes.

Although member colleges have found such support beneficial and have consistently reported a high degree of satisfaction with the support, actual program implementation has been slow. The limited enrollment and program start-up have been attributed to delayed/evolving guidance from DOL, plus a wide variety of organizational/structural issues at the college level. Such issues include: difficulty in hiring faculty and staff; late start in mapping programs of study; changes in grant leadership at the campus level; late start involving faculty in programmatic and grant discussions; and difficulty developing connections between credit and non-credit programs. Certainly, such issues are legitimate; however the low number of current participants is a concern.

The Grant Team recognizes that organizational barriers can play a role in curtailing program start-up and innovation, and such barriers may be more difficult to overcome at larger colleges. This seems especially relevant when one combines

organizational complexity with the size and scope of MoHealthWINs strategies and programs. For colleges who are experiencing such difficulties, individual consultation with a college's executive level leadership to identify and address such barriers may prove valuable.

Key findings related to Grant Program Implementation are highlighted below.

- Actual program implementation has been slow and current enrollment is not consistent with expected final outcome measures.
- Participant profiles reveal that colleges are developing programs to address the grant target population.
- Member colleges are currently examining potential grant modifications. It is expected that such modifications will allow a college to more aggressively engage in program implementation aimed at reaching the participant and outcome targets.
- The Grant Team's decision to examine non-performance and develop procedures for de-obligation of funds from non-performing colleges and re-obligation of such funds to other MHW partners is a positive step.
- Limited program innovation/start-up can often be a result of barriers related to organizational culture. Colleges should begin to aggressively address such barriers if they hope to use MHW as a transformative process and move successful innovations into mainstream practices which can be sustained beyond the life of the grant. Faculty and staff development related to such issues at the member college level is strongly encouraged.
- The upcoming "holidays" provide a well-deserved break for faculty and staff; however, for member colleges with limited program start-up and enrollment, we strongly encourage an aggressive plan to quickly re-engage faculty and staff in early January.

Grant Progress Update

Despite the somewhat slow start-up documented in the previous section, MHW has clearly made progress and laid a solid foundation to move forward. Colleges who initiated programs in Year 1 should be recognized for efforts to design programs for the target population and their willingness to Start, Evaluate, Modify and Improve (SEMI Model). The colleges' use of the SEMI Model demonstrates the potential to employ evaluation results for continuous improvement. In addition to progress at the member college level, the Grant Team's ability to continually adapt to DOL modifications and to provide consultation and guidance based upon such modifications has played a significant role in setting the stage for accelerated progress in Spring 2013.

The Grant Team worked with member colleges to develop a customized and utilization-focused approach to the DOL quarterly reporting process. This process

helped colleges more clearly recognize their targeted performance measures, as well as see the relationship between grant strategies, programs and expected outcomes. What had previously been viewed as a “bureaucratic record keeping process” at the member colleges is now recognized as a tool to help document and track progress toward outcomes measures.

The Grant Team used this new approach to successfully complete Year 1, 3rd Quarter and Year 1, 4th Quarter DOL reporting. In addition, the Grant Team in consultation with the MHW Executive Team used the MHW quarterly reporting process to re-visit the wide variety of MHW strategies and develop the following set of Statewide priorities:

- Contextualized Developmental Education;
- Career Pathways Designed Around Industry Approved Stackable Credentials;
- Credit for Prior Learning;
- Chunking/Modularization of Courses;
- Non-Credit To Credit Bridges;
- Expansion of On-Line Learning Opportunities
- Faculty and Staff Development

At the direction of the MHW Executive Director, statewide work groups are coming together to share best practices, lessons learned and expertise associated with each of these priorities.

The customized quarterly reporting process, as well as the MHW participant data collection process proved valuable in completing the DOL Year 1 Annual Performance Report (APR). All Year 1 quarterly reporting and the APR were completed on-time and in a 100 percent accurate manner.

As MHW enters the 2nd Quarter of Year 2, progress measures related to the number of participants, grant expenditures, participant retention, credential acquisition, and program completion will become increasingly important. In addition, the Grant Team should direct attention to monitoring and systematic data collection to document that college-based strategies have moved from planned activities to actual implementation. Colleges must also provide evidence that they are taking steps to sustain new and innovative strategies beyond the life of the grant.

The Grant Team has been working closely with its Third Party Evaluator (TPE), Bragg & Associates to establish a framework for assessing progress in these areas. Bragg & Associates conducted five site visits with a sample of member colleges during the Fall 2012 term. While working in conjunction with the Grant Team, Bragg & Associates used the site visits to gain an understanding of the scope of MHW efforts, as well as outline issues for further research and evaluation. Key findings from Bragg & Associates are presented below.

- **“Enthusiasm** – High level of enthusiasm and commitment; enthusiasm about creating new pathways for the target population, particularly non-credit to credit pathways.
- **Leadership** – Committed leadership at most colleges; connections to previous initiatives (ATD, workforce, tech prep) strengthens leadership.
- **Slow Start** – Some colleges experienced difficulties with staffing and lacked the knowledge required for implementation; big learning curve.
- **Facilities** – Range of facilities – some very nice, others lacking and contributing to new partnership development between colleges.
- **Programs & Practices** – Genuine interest in change, but limited specifics on how programs and strategies will be implemented. Limited knowledge of non-credit to credit program options.
- **Research** – High level of confidence in the ability of the colleges to respond to the research component of the grant, and interest in using data for continuous improvement.
- **Transformative Change** – Active and widespread vision of MHW as a vehicle to bring about transformative change.
- **Partnerships** – Partnerships are broadly conceived with other colleges, WIBs, employers, etc., are identified as critical components of the grant.
- **Stakeholder Involvement** – Discussion of stakeholder involvement (faculty, students, employers, workforce providers and others) but I (B&A) have not had the opportunity to gather these data yet---jury is still out.
- **Communication** – Unclear how many faculty and staff know about MHW outside of those most closely associated with the grant.
- **Key Paradigm Shifts** – The following items were mentioned as paradigm shifts or “The Big Change”
 - Portal and transitions concepts to increase student success.
 - Contextualized developmental education.
 - Learn and earn opportunities and internships.
 - Stackable credentials focused on career pathways.
 - Statewide cooperation and REAL college to industry partnerships.
 - Non-credit to credit bridges.
 - Accessibility and intrusive student services to support accessibility.
 - Modularization and course acceleration.”

The following key findings are based upon a review of MHW progress to-date, as well as the findings from Bragg & Associates:

- The MHW Consortium and member colleges are making progress. However, the Grant is at a critical juncture and program start-up must be accelerated and enrollment increased if MHW is to achieve its desired outcomes. January and February 2013 are critical months in this process.

- Additional site visits by Bragg and Associates should be scheduled for Spring 2013. Such visits should focus on whether member colleges are implementing grant-designated strategies in a timely manner and assess member colleges' capacity to support and sustain programs, strategies, and innovations related to key paradigm shifts and Statewide priorities.
- Campus-based faculty and staff development should be initiated to support key paradigm shifts and Statewide priorities, with an emphasis on sustaining effective practices beyond the life of the grant.

Grant Performance Outcomes Update

Although full tracking of the Summer 2012 and Fall 2012 MHW participants will not begin until January 2013, it should be noted that participants at a number of colleges have completed credit hours (or non-credit contact hours) and stackable credentials within their program of study. In addition, all students who started in a MHW program during Summer 2012 were retained in a MHW programs in Fall 2012.

We are eager to begin tracking credit hour completion, term to term retention, and employment acquisition and will begin this process in late January 2013 for those students who started in Summer 2012 or Fall 2012. We are especially interested in noting any employment benefits associated with the completion of stackable credentials. In addition, we are also exploring the "psychology of achievement" for students who completed credit hours and credentials, but have not yet completed their program of study. Our hypothesis is that academic completion and skill development will positively impact an individual's self-worth and lead to a greater commitment to student engagement and persistence. We are working with several member colleges to pilot a student follow-up survey to examine this hypothesis.

The first performance question listed in our evaluation plan was "are individual college strategies and statewide strategies being implemented as designed in a timely manner?" Data from both C&A and the TPE suggest mixed results to this question. Several colleges have taken significant steps and moved from planned activities to actual strategy and program implementation, while other colleges are still considering the best approach for actual implementation. This finding and our related concerns are outlined in the Grant Program Implementation Update section of this report.

It is important to note that the MHW Consortium has a solid foundation across the State and appears poised to launch additional programs in Spring 2013. There is every reason to believe that the number of MHW participants will increase significantly once additional programs are started. In addition as a result of MHW, a number of Statewide work groups are scheduled to address key paradigm shifts associated with: Credit for Prior Learning; Stackable Credentials, Non-Credit to Credit Bridges; Contextualized Developmental Education; Intrusive Student Support

Services; Expansion of On-Line Learning Opportunities; and Modularization and Course Acceleration.

In our Evaluation Progress Report #1 (June, 2012), we noted the need for progress in the following five areas: Increased Communication and Information Sharing; Campus Organization and Engagement; Data Collection, Reporting, & Grant Monitoring; External Partnerships & Engagement; and Continuous Improvement Process & Program Sustainability. In the past six months the Grant Team and member colleges have made significant progress in all five areas. Progress related to these areas is presented below.

- New Communication Director has been hired and website has been enhanced.
- Grant Team has conducted additional site visits at each campus and conducted staff development training sessions across the State.
- MHW Dashboard information sharing system was implemented and grant progress measures are widely shared.
- MHW has received national attention and recognition from DOL, Mathematica, Complete College America and The Gates Foundation.
- Member colleges have hired additional faculty and staff and Grant leadership is in place at each college.
- Member colleges are more fully engaged in tracking and reporting of progress measures related to MHW priorities and strategies.
- Member colleges have fully developed program of study instructional maps, including stackable credentials.
- Data collection training was provided for all member colleges and Year 1 participant data was collected.
- UI employment and wage data was secured and is now being integrated into the MHW participant and comparison cohort analysis.
- Performance data tracking is set to begin in January 2013.
- Inter-agency and partner MOUs have been developed.
- Member colleges continue to increase their partnerships with industry.
- Partnership agreements between member colleges are progressing.
- Initial TPE evaluation process has been completed and results are being used to explore best approaches to faculty and staff development aimed at the use of data for continuous improvement processes.

Action Recommendations For Continuous Improvement

To assist in the continued development of MoHealthWINS and capitalize on its transformative potential, we offer the following recommendations.

- Cosgrove & Associates should partner with Bragg & Associates to assist colleges in clearly identifying research/evaluation questions associated with the “Big Paradigm Shifts”. This process should be incorporated into the upcoming TPE site visits outlined in the Grant Progress Update section of this report (see page 7). As a starting point we recommended a conceptual framework related to the following questions.
 - Have planned strategies been implemented as designed in a timely manner?
 - Are the strategies effective?
 - Why are the strategies effective?
 - What specific steps are colleges taking to sustain effective strategies?
- Colleges should take immediate actions to more fully share and communicate MHW strategies and programs across their campuses. Executive Leadership and faculty engagement should be central components of this effort.
- The inclusion of an “Innovation Index” in the MoHealthWINS Dashboard is an excellent idea. The Grant Team should work with the MoHealthWINS Executive Team to operationally define the Innovation Index. The following questions should be considered in the development of this Index:
 - How does the innovation relate to the key, statewide paradigm shifts?
 - What is the size/scope of the innovation (i.e., how many students will it impact)?
 - What is the likelihood that the innovation can be brought to scale and maintained beyond the life of the grant?
- MoHealthWINS has the potential for transformative change, however its targets are challenging and time is short. To help maintain momentum and funding beyond the life of the grant, MoHealthWINS should consider the selection of ONE major paradigm shift and develop a prospectus to secure funding from a national foundation (i.e., Lumina, Gates, etc.). A Statewide effort to reform and redesign developmental education with a focus on contextualization and acceleration would be an excellent candidate for such a prospectus.

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