



VALUEOPTIONS® PENNSYLVANIA SERVICE CENTER IS LEADING a transformational cross-integration effort through individual contracts with 14 counties in southwest Pennsylvania to administer the behavioral health component of their Medicaid program, which is known as HealthChoices.

Each contract, though designed to meet the unique needs of each county, has a common thread – a state-of-the-art, single-contract bringing together county welfare mental health and substance abuse services to eliminate “shadow behavioral health systems” and ensure that behavioral health needs are funded and managed by quality driven behavioral health professionals.

Accomplishments include:

- **Tailored county-by-county approaches:** ValueOptions® offers custom-designed approaches both in type of contract and mix of services. Of the 14 contracts, two are shared-risk agreements and the others are managed under full risk agreements, but the management is coordinated with non-profit organizations created by each county. ValueOptions® produces comprehensive monthly reports for each county and develop county-specific quality improvement plans. Call systems display the county of the caller on each telephone display unit. Staff often collaborates with the county’s case managers around the treatment of high-need consumers, with some ValueOptions® care managers and county case managers even co-located in the same buildings and using the same clinical information system.
- **Complex care management:** Complex care managers specialize in the coordination of care for members who have diagnoses of Seriously Mentally Ill, Mental Health/Drug & Alcohol, Mental Health/Mental Retardation and Mental Health/Medically Complex. They work with the consumer and family to develop and coordinate individualized plans of care that are based on consumers’ strengths and input, which often include community-based services from multiple providers.
- **Cultural competency:** ValueOptions® is rolling out a specific cultural competency plan for Pennsylvania related to Appalachian culture, which includes a formal assessment of staff competency as well as training as needed.

AT A GLANCE

Clients: 14 individual counties in southwest Pennsylvania

Covered Lives: 280,000 adults and children

Contracted Services: broad range of mental health and substance abuse treatment

Type of Contracts: Risk & ASO

Employees: 155

Location: Trafford, PA with 8 satellite offices

Date Started: January 1999

- **Telepsychiatry Program:** According to an estimate from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, the country has only 7,000 child psychiatrists but needs about 30,000. The shortage is especially acute in rural areas. ValueOptions®, telepsychiatry program has been implemented in some extremely rural areas with no public transportation services. By coordinating various systems – County Human Services, mental health providers, the state Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, as well as ValueOptions® – the program provides a seamless delivery of mental health services for children.
- **Crisis Prevention Planning:** ValueOptions® has developed crisis prevention plans based on company best practices nationwide, building on a study that found that consumers who completed such plans and actually used them had substantially fewer readmissions to inpatient care and fewer hospital days than their peers who did not. These crisis prevention plans are individualized plans developed by consumers, with input from others close to them, to identify their triggers for crises and activities that they can undertake to help them avoid or mitigate a crisis.

- **Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services:** As the behavioral health component of the federally managed Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic Treatment Program, comprehensive behavioral services are offered for youth with serious emotional disturbances, developmental disabilities, and/or autism. Innovative features of this program include a thorough assessment of each child's needs conducted by an independent, conflict-free psychologist or psychiatrist. (In the past, assessments were conducted by staff employed by the agencies that deliver behavioral health services.) These evaluators now use a standardized assessment developed by ValueOptions® which incorporates Child Adolescent Service System Program principles, identifies the child's and family's strengths, and assesses the child in the context of multiple life domains. On a quarterly basis, our staff reviews a random sample of completed assessments using a standardized measurement tool to check the completed assessments for thoroughness and effectiveness.
- **Aftercare Unit:** Our Aftercare coordinators work with members who have been hospitalized to ensure that they attend an outpatient appointment within seven days of their discharge. Aftercare coordinators make sure that the outpatient appointment is scheduled and assist with referrals to other community resources/services.
- **Linkage with physical health plan:** ValueOptions® worked with the physical health plans participating in the HealthChoices program around joint referral and shared care management for high need members, formulary development, as well as joint provider trainings where attendance actually exceeded registration.
- **Increased provider training:** Trained field coordinators conducted over 280 site visits to providers in 2005. To date, 27 education sessions have been completed. In addition, providers are required to frequently renew their credentials.
- **Convenient access to children's mental health services:** The ValueOptions® telepsychiatry program has been extremely successful with over 80 percent consumer and psychiatrist satisfaction being reported. Participating children have kept their scheduled appointments 96 percent of the time, up from 75 percent before the program was implemented.
- **Reinvestment of services:** We have used reinvestment dollars to fund "brick & mortar," start-up, and ongoing overhead costs for a consumer-driven drop-in center.
- **Increase reimbursement rates:** Operational efficiencies in Pennsylvania enabled us to keep administrative costs flat as the covered population grew. Through dialogue with the state, we identified opportunities to shift resulting surplus funds back to providers in rate increases for targeted services.
- **Provider satisfaction:** Overall 97.5 percent of providers surveyed were satisfied with ValueOptions® in 2005.
- **Consumer and family satisfaction:** According to a 2005 survey of six counties, 93 percent of consumers and families indicated they were satisfied with the services they received.
- **Utilization increase:** In Pennsylvania, overall penetration for all levels of care in all counties increased from 17 percent in 2001 to 21.9 percent in 2005.

Breakthrough results:

- **Superior claims turnaround times:** We have exceeded state standards for over 5 years with 90 percent of clean claims paid within 20 days (vs. standard 30 days). Claims accuracy is over 98.5 percent.

