

Background

After the SSWG meeting on October 16, the working group members were asked to review a list of benefits and challenges associated with a state-supervised, regionally-administered system (as opposed to a county-administered system). Stakeholders and partners identified the benefits and challenges during the SOG's information gathering efforts during the summer (surveys, interviews, focus groups).

The purpose of this exercise was to begin the process of answering this key question: *What are the most important issues the SSWG wants the legislature to consider in any discussions related to creating a system of regional administration?* Each survey participant was allocated 25 points for benefits and another 25 points for challenges. They were asked to assign point values to the ideas. By assigning points to a particular idea, the member was indicating that the idea was important for the legislature to consider. The number of points assigned to an idea indicated the relative importance (i.e., higher number = more important).

The tables below include a summary of the responses received. The results show

- Count: How many people assigned points to the idea
- Sum: The total sum of the points assigned
- Mean: The average of the points assigned to the idea (Sum/Count)

The SSWG will use these results to initiate and inform discussions during the meeting on November 8.

SSWG SURVEY RESULTS: PERCEIVED BENEFITS/CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Benefits	Count	Sum	Mean
1. The potential to provide more consistent training and professional development.	8	29	3.63
2. The potential to better deploy staff across the region, particularly for those staff with a specific expertise or for programs with relatively few clients, or for off-hours service coverage.	6	17	2.83
3. The potential to generate more consistency in practice and policy interpretation	4	16	4.00
4. The potential to operate more effectively when the general population is sparse or client population is low.	3	15	5.00
5. The potential to improve accountability	5	15	3.00
6. The potential to increase state support so that services are more consistent across the state.	5	14	2.80
7. The potential to create economies of scale	3	13	4.33
8. The potential to generate better outcomes for children and families.	5	12	2.40
9. The potential to align regions with other key maps (judicial districts, LME's, etc.) which could improve service.	4	10	2.50
10. The potential to stabilize staffing. There would be less motivation to move to another county because pay/benefits would be more consistent.	3	9	3.00
11. The potential to create efficiencies in that the state would be supervising fewer entities.	3	8	2.67
12. The potential to strengthen communication between regions and the decision-makers or the public.	2	5	2.50
13. The potential to improve access to services for multiple counties at a single site.	2	4	2.00
14. The potential to decrease the influence of local politics.	3	3	1.00
15. The potential to share benefits of expertise or resources between smaller and larger counties.	2	3	1.50
16. The potential to learn from our experiences with mental health reform/LME's.	2	3	1.50
17. Add a new option. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to track between counties, especially child welfare 			

SSWG SURVEY RESULTS: PERCEIVED BENEFITS/CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Challenges	Count	Sum	Mean
1. The challenge of perceived or actual loss of local flexibility and control.	6	18	3.00
2. The challenge of managing the roles of the counties, a new regional entity, and the state.	6	18	3.00
3. The challenge of redesigning funding for social services programs, including county contributions, cost-sharing, etc.	6	17	2.83
4. The challenge of generating or addressing anxiety about the change process at the individual, organizational, and community levels.	4	13	3.25
5. The challenge of managing regions that contain counties of differing size, population, service needs, etc.	4	13	3.25
6. The challenge of managing diverse resources and philosophies across counties within the region.	4	12	3.00
7. The challenge of the state's unwillingness to bear the cost of regional administration.	4	11	2.75
8. The challenge of perceived or actual loss of local service sites.	4	10	2.50
9. The challenge of perceived or actual loss of local relationships.	3	9	3.00
10. The challenge of managing county liability if a region fails.	4	9	2.25
11. The challenge of designing "ownership" into a new regional authority.	3	8	2.67
12. The challenge of quantifying precise estimates of any kind of benefits or savings that might be achieved.	4	8	2.00
13. Add a new option.	2	8	4.00
14. The challenge of managing regions across the state that are not equal in size, population, service needs, etc.	3	7	2.33
15. The challenge of implementing regional administration with counties that have consolidated human service departments.	3	7	2.33
16. The challenge of managing DSS legal representation across the different courts within the region.	2	5	2.50
17. The challenge of identifying the "best" criteria to use in designing regions (geographical proximity, similar population size among non-contiguous counties, etc.)	2	5	2.50
18. The challenge of resisting change to the status quo.	2	5	2.50
19. The challenge of associating this change with the negative outcomes generated by mental health reform.	2	4	2.00
20. The challenge of managing multiple judicial districts within a single region.	2	4	2.00
21. The challenge of perceived or actual loss of individual county identities.	2	3	1.50
22. The challenge of managing historical lack of trust or successful cooperation across counties within a region or across regions.	3	3	1.00

23. Add a new option.

- The challenge of knowing or measuring if outcomes are expected to improve with this model.
- The challenge of maintaining community service accessibility.
- The challenge of counties maintaining specific best practices.

Additional Text Entries:

- Counties enjoy solving problems for their citizens. Any loss of that ability will likely result in poorer outcomes for citizens. Similarly, citizens want someone they know to contact for help.
- The successes of this endeavor are linked to the effectiveness of design and function of the “dashboard” and the willingness of government at all levels and in all branches to commit the necessary resources to make meaningful improvements to our social services system that the public can clearly see and experience.
- 1. Funding: How would regional administration be funded? Would it require more/less/same county funding? Would it require more/less/same state funding?
- 2. Accessibility of services: Would services be as assessable to citizens as they are with the county administered system? Would there still be a county specific social services presence with a regional administered system?
- 3. How many: How many regions would there be? 30? 20? 15?
- 4. Regional Administration and State Regional Supervision: How would a system of regional administration interact with state regional offices? Would the regions be the same as the state regions or fall within the state regions?
- 5. County, State and Regional Relationships: What would be the relationships and responsibilities between county government, state government and the regional authorities? Who would be accountable to who? What would be the accountability structure? Could the DHHS Secretary assume authority over a regional department? If so, under what circumstances?
- 6. Regional Administration Formation: What grouping of counties would make up each region and who would decide county assignment to a region? Could a county withdraw from one region and join another?
- 7. Scope of Programs Administered Regionally: Would all social services programs be administered regional or just certain programs? If certain programs would the program administered regionally vary from region to region?
- There are many issues here and it was difficult to assign points since there are so many concerns. My biggest concern is the current status in which counties are not communicating in cases of child welfare. As long as benefits are being received from the state, we should be able to know the exact location of those recipients.