

Counties and Local Mental Health Advisory Councils

Overview

Local Mental Health Advisory Councils (LACs) offer individuals, parents, families and providers the opportunity to make a real difference in how mental health care is provided in their community, and they offer county and state policy makers the wisdom of people's experiences first-hand.

LACs should be made up of diverse groups of individuals that are representative of the community they are serving. In Minnesota, all counties are required to have an LAC, and they are usually established by a county board.

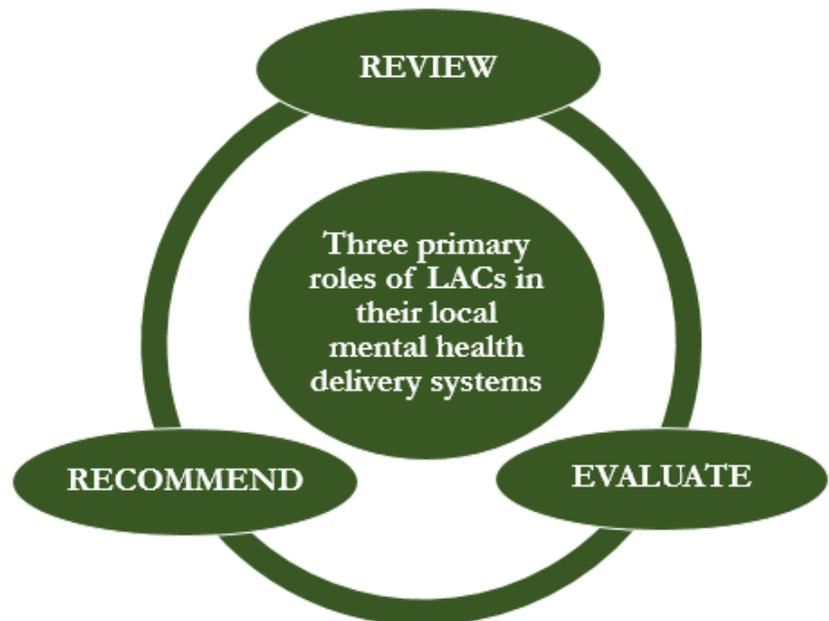
What LACs do

LACs are required to provide recommendations, review and evaluate local mental health services in their communities on at least a quarterly basis.

LACs provide recommendations specific to changes, additions and improvements to the local mental health delivery system that impacts individuals receiving services, family members, community members, stakeholders and service providers.

Benefits of LACs

- Having an active, productive and effective LAC can lead to the improvement of the local mental health system and services for the community.
- LACs offer advice on the local mental health system on what is and is not working for the community.
- Counties can use LACs to advise them on a range of mental health related topics, such as improving their local mental health and social services system.



Produced by the Mental Health Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services, in collaboration with the Local Advisory Council work group of the Minnesota State Advisory Council on Mental Health and Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health.

Membership

The goal of LACs is to use the knowledge of a broad range of people to improve mental health services. Legislation requires that the membership of LACs include persons who have received mental health services as adults, persons who have received mental health services as children or adolescent, and parents and family members.

Adult LACs must include at least:

- One individual with a mental illness
- One family member of an adult with a mental illness
- One mental health professional
- One community support services program representative

Children's LACs must include at least:

- One person who was in a mental health program as a child or adolescent
- One parent of a child or adolescent with a serious emotional and behavioral disorder
- One children's mental health professional
- Representatives of minority populations of significant size residing in the county
- One representative of the children's mental health local coordinating council
- One family community support services program representative

LACs should strive to have at least 51 percent of people with a lived mental illness experience, parents and family members. LACs should actively recruit these members in order to be inclusive of all voices. To help ensure broad representation that reflects the area's population, LACs should identify underserved populations in their counties and communities.

Many LACs have benefited by including:

- Community and faith-based leaders
- Communities of color, American Indian/Native American communities and individuals from underserved communities
- Tribal members and leaders
- Representatives from schools and districts
- Law enforcement
- Crisis responders
- Organizations working with community mental health centers
- Advocacy organizations
- Individuals interested in public policy

Adult and Children's LACs may be combined, as long as membership requirements for each LAC are met. Multi-county and regional LACs are also permitted, but should include individuals with lived experience of mental illness and family representation from each county.

For more information about LAC, visit <http://mn.gov/dhs/lac>

Mental Health Division, Department of Human Services

651-431-2225

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LB3-0001 (3-13)



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