



“Skillful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests.” – Greek Philosopher Epictetus

Dear Community Member,

In the face of a tough fiscal environment, and the significant reduction in behavioral health services for thousands of individuals, we’ve found ourselves navigating in “rough waters.” But I believe Magellan and our provider partners have become stronger for it, and more adept at finding new, innovative and cost-effective ways to help our service recipients effectively press forward in their voyage to recovery.

One area where we’ve made significant progress is in the crisis system. Since the non-Title XIX benefits change, the crisis system has continued to provide exceptional care and the highest level of accessibility. Magellan and its provider partners have addressed the county’s crisis services at a system level. For an overview of the changes in the crisis system, please see the August 27, 2010, issue of the *Arizona Capitol Times*, “Help at any hour,” pages 18-19. Through judicious planning, we have developed the supports, added the resources and created the joint accountability that the crisis system needs to provide the highest possible coordinated quality of care.

Let me tell you about a few of the recent system achievements:

- The urgent psychiatric care centers—Psychiatric Recovery Center West (PRC-West) and the Urgent Psychiatric Care Center (UPC)—have made some exceptional strides in reducing hospital holds. The average hospital hold rate for PRC-West and the UPC went down from 78 percent of the time in May 2009 to zero hospital holds since July 9, 2010—truly remarkable results.
- Southwest Behavioral Health drove its average length of stay at the Crisis Recovery Unit to just three days, down from a high of 87 days in November of 2009.
- ConnectionsAZ and RIAZ are formalizing their joint coordination protocol to ensure fast access and take full advantage of the available urgent care capacity wherever it exists in the system.
- Crisis Response Network (CRN) anticipated the possibility of increased call center and mobile crisis volume with the benefit change, and has implemented four new mobile crisis teams. We did not observe any notable increase in crisis call volume in July, but did experience an increase in mobile crisis dispatches of approximately 10 per day. However, the new system capacity provided the ability to respond to an additional 18 referrals per day, so service response times have not been negatively impacted.

I’m also pleased to announce plans for additional new supports to the crisis system. Two short-term residential facilities are under development, one in the East Valley and one in the West Valley. Also planned are two 24/7 outpatient clinics. These facilities will provide support services for early intervention and triage services, preventing people from needing to go to the UPC, PRC-West or hospital emergency departments when their needs can be better met through less intrusive services.

Although we're pleased with these results, we are early on in the non-Title XIX benefits change. There are still many people who have not yet felt the full effects of these changes. We must continue to be vigilant in our monitoring and managing of the situation, and keep our recipients informed of the resources and supports available to them.

We face significant challenges ahead. The legislative session is just around the corner. In addition, the FMAP funding our state was counting on will be considerably less than expected. I ask you to join with us in advocating for those experiencing mental and behavioral health issues. And I encourage you to express your ideas about how we are moving the system forward. If you have not attended a Magellan Governance Board meeting recently, I invite you to do so. Learn more about these meetings on the [Magellan of Arizona website](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Clarke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" and last name "Clarke" clearly distinguishable.

Richard Clarke, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
Magellan Health Services of Arizona