**WA FTC Rural Court Roundtable**

**06/29/22**

Funding and Partners Acknowledgement

Accessibility and Information Equity Message

Land Acknowledgement

Health Professional Shortage Areas:

* Deficit of providers for people by area
* Map of Washington State mental health facilities, Medically underserved areas, and Medically underserved areas- Governors Exception

People are talking about mental health now more than ever:

* Pre and Post onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic Tweets about mental health
* Graphs depict much more discussion of telehealth and mental health online

There are differences in services between rural and non-rural areas:

* Higher Telemedicine use
* More solo providers
* Less evidence-based practices
* Rural-Nonrural differences in telemedicine use for mental and substance use disorders among Medicaid beneficiaries Study found that:
  + People in rural areas who accessed virtual services, also accessed in-person services more

Discussion of barriers/challenges to families in rural areas:

* Transportation is a huge issue- bus services, schedules, etc.
  + Dept. will give gas vouchers and bus passes
  + But availability is a big problem
* Housing- cost, availability, etc.
* Lack of DV services/treatment
* Is it possible to lean on social workers for transportation services?
* Lack of internet connectivity and access to devices
* Lack of providers in general- depending on location
* Change-over within providers in rural areas
  + Financially incentivizing providers to be in those areas could help
* If using zoom- making sure providers are keeping clients engaged & comfortable
  + Smaller groups are better, even if capacity is greater
* Privacy for rural participants engaging in virtual services is a concern
* Bias from small, rural-town, community members is also a concern

Discussion of innovative practices we can do to help work around barriers:

* OPD Parent representation social workers are critical
  + Partnership with families and getting them engaged is important
* Focusing on what we can do
* Utilizing virtual services
  + Remote services can expand access and your program
* Being flexible, nimble, and creative in responding to the needs of families
* Parents came and stayed to virtual programs
* Virtual court is helpful to families in treatment- they can get access and stay engaged
* Virtual can increase participation from both families & staff
  + Reducing travel time can help staff be more efficient and create less stress