

## **Consumer/Survivor Initiatives: Funding Alternative Mental Health Resources**

**ITEM/ISSUE:** Organizations run by and for individuals who have or have had a mental illness are historically under funded relative to all other mental health organizations.

**BASIS FOR DISCUSSION:** This under funding has made it difficult if not impossible to sit at the table as an equal with other providers of mental health services. Historically, these organizations are limited in administrative resources, (appropriate) staffing, training dollars and travel dollars that would enable them to respond efficiently to the needs of the individuals they serve.

**COMPONENTS/ANALYSIS:** Prior to the incredible increase in accountability, these organizations as a general rule were not funded appropriately enough to provide services at the level needed. Since the new accountability, it has gotten worse and has resulted in the demise of groups; the assumption of these services by traditional mental health organizations; or other added stress to those who are trying to keep up. As traditional community mental health organizations as a rule are not yet on a level playing field with hospitals, the consumer run organization is far behind the community services in sufficient resources, administration, personnel.

**TARGET/AUDIENCE:** Provincial Ministries of Health and Mental Health; Federal Department of Health

**RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS:** That a protected funding envelope be created in each province and/or at the federal level that is separate from the clinical services typically funded. That these consumer run organizations develop together manuals of operations, evidenced based best practices, standards of operation, and benchmarks that will clearly identify them, the philosophy and approach and the criteria that measures their success. That these organizations are held to account for these processes in comparison with each other and the applied standards with in the funding envelope. That their status in mental health systems be acknowledged as recognized non-clinical alternatives and/or adjuncts to the traditional mental health services.

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