The EPISC Center is a collaborative partnership between the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center, College of Health and Human Development, Penn State University. The EPISC Center is funded by DHS and PCCD. This resource was developed by the EPISC Center through PCCD grant VP-ST-24368.
“AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE.”
- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
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Letter from the Founding Director

Dear EPISCenter Friends and Partners,

Along with Dr. Bradley, I am so pleased to share with you this long-overdue first ever annual report of the EPISCenter, to provide just a glimpse of the work of this unique state-level intermediary and backbone organization as we support the Commonwealth in its efforts to promote better outcomes for children and families.

When the Prevention Research Center (PRC) opened in 1998, among its very first projects was a process evaluation funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) of Pennsylvania’s then relatively new Communities That Care (CTC) initiative. That PCCD funded initiative sought to develop communities’ capacity for data-driven, risk-focused strategic prevention planning. At the time, the CTC initiative was groundbreaking and progressive, utilizing the very latest prevention science to strategically reduce and prevent delinquency. The PRC’s evaluation led to a number of policy and practice recommendations that, to our delight, PCCD immediately acted upon. This set the tone for an incredibly productive and trusting partnership between PCCD and PRC that continues to this day.

One of the specific recommendations of that early CTC evaluation was to establish a separate initiative to encourage and support communities in the adoption of evidence-based approaches to preventing and reducing delinquency. PCCD quickly established the Research-based Violence and Delinquency Prevention Programs Initiative, and began funding the dissemination of evidence-based programs as the logical next step to communities’ implementation of the CTC strategic prevention planning process.

At the same time, the PRC was at the forefront of a new and emerging body of research examining the challenges of dissemination, implementation, and sustainability of evidence-based models. In 1999, the PRC hosted the first national meeting of prevention scientists to promote more research in this area and began developing one of the first theoretical models for dissemination and implementation of EBPs.

After funding the first several cohorts of EBP grantees, PCCD recognized the challenges of effectively scaling effective programs while maintaining sufficient fidelity and quality and again partnered with the PRC beginning in 2001 to provide some limited technical assistance to providers and schools that had received EBP implementation funding. From 2001 through 2007, PCCD continued to fund over 200 replications of EBPs, the largest effort in the world to scale a menu of proven-effective prevention programs. The PRC continued to work closely with PCCD throughout that period, providing training and technical assistance and conducting research in order to study the process and continue building the knowledge base both in Pennsylvania and beyond.

The PRC conducted both outcome evaluations and cost-benefit analysis of PCCD’s CTC and EBP initiatives, and in 2007 released two important policy reports describing the impact and cost-effectiveness of these efforts. Following from this documented evidence of impact and return on investment, PCCD established a broader initiative and infrastructure to effectively support the continued scaling of CTC and EBPs, and added a third component to strengthen services for juvenile offenders to reduce recidivism and deeper system penetration. Through a competitively-awarded grant beginning in 2008, this initiative resulted in the creation of the EPISCenter, and the support and research described in this report.

Since its inception in 2008, as a component of PCCD’s Resource Center for Evidence-based Prevention & Intervention Programs, the EPISCenter has continued to serve as a progressive model for applying the latest prevention science to the prevention of delinquency and the promotion of positive youth development. We are grateful for the innovative leadership and support of PCCD, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and the strong partnership between the PRC and policymakers across many state agencies. We look forward to continuing to partner with the Commonwealth to improve outcomes for children and families.

Sincerely,
Brian Bumbarger
Letter from the Managing Director

Dear Friends,

It has been a great honor for me to take on the Managing Director role at the EPISCenter. The 2013-14 year has certainly been an exciting one for the EPISCenter. It is my pleasure to introduce our first Annual Report as a way to share what we have been up to over the last year.

Since January 2014, we have been striving to leverage and create synergy across our three main initiative areas of supporting community prevention coalitions, evidence-based prevention and intervention programs, and the improvement of juvenile justice programs.

We have developed a number of internal workgroups with representation across each initiative to reflect the diverse and complementary perspectives and needs of each of those areas. Each of these workgroups has helped us to transcend the propensity for internal silos and approach our work in an integrated manner. Our goal with this approach is to continually push ourselves to consider a bigger picture that includes a broader range of stakeholders and outcomes. In so doing, we aim to identify and create strategies that are sustainable because they incorporate the perspective of many stakeholder groups.

We leveraged this inter-initiative workgroup strategy to execute a state-level gaps analysis requested by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). This approach brought a well-rounded perspective to the analysis of the needs of children, families and communities and to considering the goodness-of-fit of additional evidence-based programs recommended for targeted support in the state (see page 11.)

We have established an inter-initiative workgroup focused on identifying and developing ways for the juvenile justice field to become more aware of and involved in the work of community prevention coalitions and for coalitions to become more aware of the innovations occurring in Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system. This is emerging work and much of the focus this year has been on brainstorming the best ways to bridge community prevention planning and juvenile justice. As our work in these two sectors expands, we plan to actively cultivate interconnectedness across them, such as the coordinated use of risk data to identify the needs of both the general youth population and of those involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Given that many of the programs supported by the EPISCenter are implemented in schools, we have also developed an inter-initiative workgroup focused on outreach to stakeholders in the education field. This workgroup has begun to raise greater awareness among education stakeholders about evidence-based programs and availability of funding for them through PCCD. We have engaged representatives from Intermediate Units and the Center for Safe Schools/Center for Schools and Communities in these conversations, more clearly articulated the benefits of school-based prevention programs for school engagement, attendance, and academic success, and increased our presence at key educator conferences such as the Safe Schools Conference and the PA Student Assistance Professionals.

Although space limitations prohibit us from including all of our projects and accomplishments in this report, we have attempted to focus on major highlights and successes as exemplars of our work. I hope you find meaning and value in what we have chosen to highlight from the past fiscal year.

We look forward to continuing to support communities, researchers, and policymakers in evidence-based and research-informed practice to improve the lives of children and families across the Commonwealth.

With deep gratitude,
Stephanie
Mission & Vision
Connecting research, policy and real-world practice, and leading the world in translating prevention science to practice. (Established 2008.)

The Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center (EPISCenter) is a state-level prevention support system and intermediary organization. We work closely with policy makers, practitioners, and researchers to ensure the social and behavioral health of Pennsylvania youth. Our key aim is to build a bridge between these stakeholder groups with the goal of collaborating and problem-solving in a way that addresses the unique needs and challenges faced by each group. By facilitating this connection, we aim to strengthen stakeholders’ use of an evidence-informed, outcome-focused approach to violence, delinquency, and substance use prevention, and recidivism reduction.

The EPISCenter is a project of the Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center (PRC) at the Pennsylvania State University and is central to carrying out the PRC’s dissemination and implementation objectives. Since 2008, we have been funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (formerly named the Department of Public Welfare), Office of Children Youth and Families and PCCD. Additionally, we are a project of DHS and PCCD that has been formally sanctioned by PCCD’s Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee. The PRC and these Commonwealth agencies are invested in achieving public health impact through the dissemination, quality implementation, and sustainability of research-based approaches to improving the lives of children, families, and communities.

Key Stakeholders and Partners
Oversight for the EPISCenter is provided by the multi-agency, PCCD facilitated, Resource Center Steering Committee (see stakeholders below), which was also created in 2008. This collaborative effort brings together key stakeholders in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including:

- The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD);
- The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services’ Offices of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS);
- The Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission (JCJC);
- The Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers;
- The Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs;
- The Pennsylvania Department of Education;
- The Pennsylvania Department of Health;
- PCCD grantees and community-based and residential service providers.
Translating Science to Practice

This diagram shows the multiple, coordinated steps involved in taking research from the lab into communities (“research to practice”). The first four steps show the research activities that lead up to introducing programs into the field. The last four steps show the translation and implementation activities that are undergone to run programs in “real-world” settings.

Pennsylvania’s Approach to Research-based Prevention

As a state-level intermediary organization, developed in partnership between PCCD and the PRC, the EPISCenter is in a unique position to put research into real-world practice. We focus on promoting the dissemination, high-quality implementation and sustainability of:

- community-level infrastructure for prevention planning;
- evidence-based programs and practices; and
- continuous improvement of locally-developed juvenile justice programs.

Although many research trials have proven certain programs and practices to be effective, organizations that administer these programs outside of a research setting often face a multitude of barriers to success during program implementation. These barriers can limit the programs’ ability to accomplish the outcomes achieved in the research. EPISCenter works to address and alleviate these barriers by building capacity of communities and providers.

Our goal is to achieve population-level impact through these efforts. The following pages describe and highlight some examples of this work.
Communities That Care  
Creating an Infrastructure for Prevention Planning

Communities That Care (CTC) is a prevention planning model, developed by Drs. J. David Hawkins and Richard F. Catalano, Jr. of the University of Washington at Seattle. The CTC model centers on the collaborative work of stakeholders from 12 different community sectors in order to promote positive youth development.

CTC communities form a broad coalition made up of key community stakeholders that receive comprehensive training in the CTC model. Coalitions and their members learn how to conduct a needs assessment by analyzing local and state data to look for areas of improvement while also learning more about existing services within their community. Coalition members work together to identify and prioritize the risk and protective factors they want to target. Then, they explore and implement appropriate evidence-based programs that can impact those specific risk and protective factors. Focusing on risk and protective factors, rather than problem behaviors, effectively reduces delinquency, violence, substance use, and school failure and dropout.

Although PCCD’s initiative originally focused on the Communities That Care model, the EPISCenter’s technical assistance is available to support other types of coalitions and community collaboratives. Drug Free Communities coalitions, Strategic Prevention Framework, Integrated Services Plan, and the PROSPER model are examples of other community collaborative approaches that have benefited from EPISCenter support. Any Pennsylvania coalition that is interested in learning more about strategic prevention planning is welcome to join in the regional meetings and other networking opportunities facilitated by the EPISCenter’s CTC Consultants.

Communities That Care returns $5.30* per dollar invested by preventing youth tobacco use and delinquency.

*University of Washington, Social Development Research Group

FY 13/14 Data Snapshot

Average number of coalitions served: 63
CTC Regional Meetings: 15 with 322 attendees
CTC Trainings: 44 with 872 attendees

Milestones and Benchmarks

One of the many factors that set the CTC process apart from other community strategic planning models is the integration of Milestones & Benchmarks into coalition work plans. The original CTC curriculum included the practice of having coalitions rate the status of their Milestones & Benchmarks.

After developing and refining an interactive Milestones & Benchmarks tool that allows coalitions to rate their progress, we have begun to focus on rolling out this tool to coalitions. The tool automatically calculates the percent of the CTC process that the coalition has completed. It ensures they remain true to the CTC model and helps prevent “mission drift.” The rating system is now helping to track a coalition’s progress over time. This system is the most efficient way for a coalition to determine what work needs to be done, and also helps inform the EPISCenter’s CTC staff of coalition needs. This guides local training and technical assistance and also determines what types of trainings are held at the regional level.
Creation of the Coalition Advisory Group

In 2013 the Coalition Advisory Group, comprised of key stakeholders from across the state convened in State College for their first meeting. The Advisory Group seeks to provide leadership to prevention coalitions and advocate for PA coalitions at the state level. EPISCenter helps coordinate, facilitate, and host Advisory Group meetings.

Inaugural members include: Kelly Brown, Director of Community Prevention Services, Family Services; Kathy Collier, Prevention Specialist, Chester County, Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Services; Jennifer Dippold, Children’s Prevention Service Coordinator, Dickinson Center, Inc./Elk County CITC; Donna Gority, Former Blair County Commissioner; Joyce P. Kerrick, Executive Director, Partners in Family and Community Development; Joe Markiewicz, Co-Project Director, CORE, Penn State University; Sharron Michels, Executive Director, Center For Youth & Community Development; Tammy Taylor, Prevention Project Coordinator, Washington Drug & Alcohol Commission, INC.; Alice Yoder, Director Community Health & Wellness, Lancaster General Health.

Mercer County Communities That Care Receives Coalition of the Year Award

Each year, PCCD awards the Pennsylvania Prevention Coalition of the Year award to one Pennsylvania prevention coalition that has achieved measurable success in improving community-level outcomes.

Mercer County Communities That Care received the 2014 award. Laura Leskovac, Community Mobilizer and Mark Benedetto, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer for Mercer County accepted the award on the coalition’s behalf at the Commonwealth Prevention Alliance 2014 Conference.

The coalition was recognized for its sustainability model, as the county has provided future funding for the program and the Mobilizer position in the Needs-Based Budget.

Mercer County Coalition Highlights

The coalition has embraced data-driven decision-making, utilizing data from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), statistics on foster placement, juvenile out-of-home placement rates, along with other data from the Mercer County Juvenile Probation Department and the Mercer County Office of Children and Youth Services.

Past winners include:

- 2013: Erie County Policy and Planning Council
- 2012: Unified Family Services Systems of Bedford County
- 2011: Delaware County Communities That Care
Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS)
Essential prevention planning tool in PA

The PAYS is central to prevention planning in Pennsylvania because it measures risk and protective factors (RPF) in youth. Risk factors increase the chances of a youth having problems, and protective factors decrease the chances. RPF questions in the PAYS cover key developmental contexts of youths’ lives, including the community, school, family, peer, and individual domains.

EPISCenter was extensively involved in the planning, communication, and support of the 2013 PAYS. We were invited to participate in the PAYS Advisory Group, which oversees the entire PAYS process from start to finish, to share from our experiences supporting providers and communities in understanding their PAYS data. Based on current trends in risk behaviors and other feedback from the field, EPISCenter staff provided suggestions on the addition and removal of questions and topic areas for the 2013 survey, provided ideas for recruiting more school districts, and assisted in disseminating the PAYS reports. We also facilitated communication between the prevention field and state agencies about the improvements, updates, and changes to the PAYS survey and administration.

To help communities and schools understand their 2013 PAYS data, EPISCenter and PCCD collaborated to create The Pennsylvania Youth Survey How-to Guide and Workbook. The guide helps users develop a PAYS team, determine their priorities, explore evidence-based programming, and develop a comprehensive prevention plan. The guide includes a corresponding workbook with more information and resources.

Participating school districts received the guide with their 2013 district report in May 2014. EPISCenter worked with PCCD to facilitate special training sessions in Luzerne County and at the 2014 Commonwealth Prevention Alliance Conference where participants were encouraged to bring their PAYS reports to ask questions and learn about interpreting the results by using The PAYS How-to Guide & Workbook.

The PAYS is a survey administered in odd-numbered years (e.g., 2009, 2011, 2013) to youth in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades in participating schools throughout Pennsylvania. This past year (2013), 891 schools participated in administering the PAYS, with a total of 216,385 public and private school students. In 2013, the PA Dept. of Education and PA Dept. of Drug and Alcohol Programs joined PCCD in funding school district participation in the survey. This was the first-year schools did not have to pay to participate!

For more information about the Pennsylvania Youth Survey, visit www.pays.state.pa.us and to learn more about how to use your PAYS data, visit www.episcenter.psu.edu/pays.

The 2013 PAYS was funded by:
Gap Analysis

Last year, PCCD asked EPISCenter to conduct a gap analysis, to identify risk and need throughout Pennsylvania, and to recommend prevention, intervention, and innovative/promising programs to address those needs. This gap analysis served as a ‘needs assessment’ similar to the Community Needs Assessment that Communities That Care coalitions go through as part of the CTC model.

Identified Needs

The first phase of the gap analysis focused on analyzing data from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (2011 and 2013), the 2007-2009 Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission Recidivism Report, and the 2012 Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Dispositions report. These data demonstrated state-level need for programs that address:

- **Prosocial development** based on increases in youth aggression in middle school, sexual harassment in high school, high rates of youth depression, low reports of community opportunities for prosocial development, and high rates of parental attitudes favorable to antisocial behaviors.

- **Promotion of family functioning and family coping** as indicated by high rates of youth involved in the juvenile justice system who come from never-married households and disrupted family situations (i.e., divorce, separation, one or both parents deceased). Youth with both parents deceased recidivated at the highest rate of all family situations. This need was also indicated by high rates of parental attitudes favorable to antisocial behaviors. Culturally relevant programs were indicated by youth disposition and recidivism data as well as ongoing requests from providers.

Recommended Programs

Based on an extensive literature and program registry review, the gap analysis team identified over 50 candidate programs designed to address the identified needs. The team then ranked each program on a continuum of confidence based on the program’s research findings. Registries reviewed were Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, crimesolutions.gov, California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, National Registry of Evidence-based Programs & Practices, and the CDC’s strategy selection tool Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE). The following nine programs were initially recommended based on a high-level of confidence of program effectiveness:

- Familias Fuertes
- Family Bereavement Program
- Family Foundations
- New Beginnings for Children of Divorce
- Parent Child Interaction Therapy
- Positive Action
- Positive Parenting Program
- Strong African American Families
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Moving forward, the EPISCenter will take a closer look at Pennsylvania counties with elevated risk indicators and identify evidence-based programs that fit the counties’ needs and existing local strengths.

To learn more about the Gaps Analysis, and to see additional information about other identified “gaps” please visit www.episcenter.psu.edu/gaps.
Evidence-based Programs

The EPISCenter supports the implementation of a continuum of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs that have been targeted by PCCD for funding and technical assistance. This continuum of programs promotes healthy youth development and prevents juvenile delinquency. It includes universal prevention programs, like Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies for preschoolers, and intensive intervention programs designed for youth at the brink of needing juvenile justice system placement, like Multisystemic Therapy. They are shown in the matrix to the right according to where they fall on the continuum of prevention.

EPISCenter Prevention Coordinators (PCs) provide technical assistance to organizations in Pennsylvania implementing these programs. PCs work closely with providers to ensure programs are efficiently implemented with a high-level of quality. Technical assistance begins with planning, utilizing readiness tools, sample budgets, hiring, training, and materials guidelines, to help providers launch with a strong start. As an implementation moves forward, PCs conduct site visits and phone consultations to support providers in using a wide variety of fidelity and outcomes measurement tools. This pro-active approach is designed to help providers detect and address barriers to quality early in the implementation process. Woven throughout this process is a continuous emphasis on sustainability planning.

2013 Bridge Funding For Intervention Programs (FFT, MST, MTFC)

In 2013, PCCD provided one year of funding specifically dedicated to supporting the sustainability of the intervention programs, which serve higher risk youth. Ten intervention providers applied, and grants were awarded to two FFT and three MST providers. Beginning in October 2013, EPISCenter provided technical assistance to all 10 applicants to address barriers to sustainability. Strategies included:

- Using placement data from the Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission; Children, Youth & Families; and the Department of Human Services office to ensure team size matches the need in each county.
- Referral criteria and processes were clarified to eliminate barriers to referral from the Juvenile Probation; Children, Youth, & Families; and Mental Health Systems.
- Presenting outcomes and utilization data to stakeholders to promote better county planning and utilization.
- Streamlining internal case management processes to ensure clinicians carry full caseloads whenever possible.

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Developing a Pennsylvania Infrastructure for Efficiencies

As a result of its role as an intermediary organization working with funders, providers, and developers of programs, EPISCenter has been able to increase sustainability by reducing program costs for PA providers. In 2013-2014, EPISCenter continued working with stakeholders to build training infrastructure for Strengthening Families: For Parents & Youth 10-14 and The Incredible Years programs. EPISCenter now also serves as a material ordering hub for The Incredible Years, enabling PCCD grantees to purchase curricula at a discounted cost.

Strengthening Families Program: For Parents & Youth 10-14 Training & Quality Assurance

Through our technical assistance with SFP 10-14 grantees, we discovered there was a high-cost and long turn-around time related to SFP 10-14 training. We worked with the program developers at Iowa State University to create an infrastructure within Pennsylvania for official training and Quality Assurance (QA) visits. Five individuals, located strategically throughout Pennsylvania, were certified as Trainer of Trainers (TOTs), enabling faster scheduling of training as well as significant cost savings. Providers can now save approximately $1,000 per training by utilizing an in-state trainer. Also, three of the five TOTs were current PCCD grantees, and because of their TOT certification they will no longer need to request funding for training, saving the state $5,750 per site ($17,250 total).

The five TOT’s have also been prepared to complete visits to providers receiving PCCD funds as a way to help ensure the program is operating smoothly (“quality assurance”). This will not only ensure more timely quality assurance visits, but also has the potential for more meaningful QA visits as the TOTs have been part of the Pennsylvania SFP 10-14 learning community for some time. Their indigenous knowledge of the strengths and challenges of implementing SFP 10-14 creates a better connection with sites facing similar challenges and enables them to learn from one another.

The Incredible Years Training & Curriculum Discounts

We were able to decrease the costs of training for The Incredible Years providers by facilitating training in-state (as opposed to traveling out of state to Seattle, WA), allowing providers to save money. This cost savings will hopefully increase their sustainability, as well as allow less transition time for new staff training. Trainings are now well attended and allow for more efficient travel. EPISCenter now serves as a hub for ordering program materials, which also includes discounted curriculum. Discounts ranged from 10-25% and are anticipated to increase in 2015.

Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Counties

The Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project is authorized by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services in a total of nine states. Combined with flexible use of Title IV-E Funds, the goal is to improve safety, permanency, and well-being of children in the child welfare system. The project is being implemented in five Pennsylvania counties, and it aims to improve outcomes for children and families through effective family engagement strategies, comprehensive assessment of needs, and the use of evidence-based practices.

The EPISCenter provided consultation and served as a resource in two of the PA counties that are participating in this initiative. In Dauphin County, EPISCenter helped to develop a process for screening potential new programs utilizing researched outcomes. In Philadelphia County, EPISCenter continued to provide support to FFT through the provision of an aggregated county outcomes report and has worked to help stakeholders understand the importance of braided funding strategies for this program that is a crucial part of their project.

For more information, visit http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/ChildWelfareDemoProject.htm.
Data Collection: Building our Understanding of What Works

Annual Survey of Evidence-based Programs (ASEP) and Exit Interviews

Every year the EPISCenter sends out the Annual Survey of Evidence-based Programs (ASEP) to current and past PCCD Violence Prevention Programs and Substance Abuse Education and Demand Reduction grantees who have implemented evidence-based programs in PA. The ASEP observes and documents successes and challenges experienced by grantees and allows us to objectively assess the state of evidence-based programming in PA. One of the important focuses of this survey is ongoing sustainability.

At the end of each grant, we conduct “exit interviews.” In these phone interviews we gather qualitative information about implementation and sustainability, as well as recommendations and insight from grantees on technical assistance and funding. Information from both surveys is then shared internally and externally with stakeholders to inform future technical assistance, implementation, and funding practices.

- Sustaining programs: Exit survey data in 2013-2014 showed that 90% of grantees whose funding ended indicated their programs would continue at some level. Almost half of them (47%) indicated programming would continue to operate at the same capacity.

Recent ASEP Highlights

The results from the last administration of the survey (2013) indicated that providers are actively planning for sustainability:

- 80% of providers indicated that they had a sustainability plan and had modified it in the last 12 months.
- Of the grantees that said that they did not have a sustainability plan or had not modified their plan, over half (60%) indicated sustainability planning activities in the last year.

Prevention and Intervention Program Outcomes Data

Keeping Track of Progress: Data Collection

Data collection plays a central role in ensuring high-quality implementation and contributes to program sustainability when data are shared with stakeholders. Between 2008 and 2010, in collaboration with the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency and program developers, the EPISCenter established standard indicators and quality/outcome assessment measures for a diverse menu of 11 programs. During that time, tools were developed to empower providers to rapidly analyze and report their data. Since then EPISCenter has developed systematic processes for ensuring the validity and quality of data being gathered on these programs, and for aggregating these data at a program and statewide level. Our goal is to enable provider, community, state, and developer stakeholders to monitor, improve, and meaningfully communicate about implementation and impact. In 2015, we continue to improve and refine this work and strive to make it more meaningful (see next page).

University of Colorado at Boulder’s Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) LifeSkills Training Project

The EPISCenter was presented with a unique opportunity to assist CSPV with their LifeSkills Training (LST) Project. CSPV was awarded a grant to provide three years of training, technical assistance, and program materials to schools or school districts interested in implementing LST. PCCD provided resources for participating schools to collect pre- and post-test surveys from their students (this data collection process was voluntary for schools). All together, almost 5,000 students completed pre- and post-tests in 54 different schools throughout the state, and EPISCenter produced school district and statewide reports summarizing the outcomes.

For more information visit http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/lst_grant/.
Estimating Return on Investment (ROI) of Evidence-based Programs in Pennsylvania

Prevention Models
Prevention program providers use standardized, Excel-based data entry and analysis tools to record, analyze, and report implementation data. Providers were able to collect and report pre- and post-test data for 68% of youth and 71% of parent participants. Then this data was aggregated across providers and programs to estimate the comprehensive total return on investment. Across these six programs, 5,711 youth/families were served, and the total monetary benefit (after subtracting the program costs) is over $19 million.

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Cost per Participant*</th>
<th>Benefit per Participant**</th>
<th>Benefit Minus Cost</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
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* Based on analysis of 2010-2012 PCCD budgets of EBP grantees.
**Washington State Institute of Public Policy estimates as of October 2014.
The Olweus Program and PATHS were not included because benefit-per-participant figures have not been developed for these programs by economists.

Intervention Models
Evidence-based intervention (EBI) program providers report their outcomes quarterly using the Integrated System for Program Implementation and Real-time Evaluation, “INSPIRE,” web-based data collection system. On a quarterly basis, INSPIRE integrates fidelity data from each program’s respective national data system with data collected by EBI providers. EPISCenter and EBI providers are then able to access comprehensive reports to inform program improvement strategies and communicate outcomes to stakeholders. A recent enhancement to INSPIRE allows generation of county-specific reports and reports organized by youth referral source. These reports enable stakeholders to see trends by county and system.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Cost per Participant*</th>
<th>Benefit per Participant**</th>
<th>Benefit Minus Cost</th>
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</table>

* Includes all youth clinically discharged in FY 13/14. Administrative discharges are not included.
**Based on average BH-MCO rate and hours billed per completed case, as reported by providers in a 2012 survey (see here for details). MTFC cost includes room and board.
**Washington State Institute of Public Policy estimates as of October 2014.
Juvenile Justice and the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP)

Last year, the EPISCenter had the unique opportunity to begin piloting the SPEP initiative in Pennsylvania. The SPEP is a key aspect of Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy. It draws on meta-analytic research that has identified juvenile justice services and the characteristics that are effective at reducing recidivism. Juvenile justice practitioners can use the SPEP process to align their locally developed programs to best-practices in the research.

In 2011, Pennsylvania was one of the four states chosen to participate in the Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project (JJSIP) of Georgetown University’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, with Berks County as a pilot site. Berks County Deputy Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Jeff Gregro facilitated the first “SPEPing” of a provider organization. In July 2013, the SPEP pilot expanded to five additional counties, Allegheny, Berks, Bucks, Dauphin, and Lehigh as well as OCYF residential facilities, and EPISCenter added three new staff members to support the SPEP project. These three staff, an identified juvenile probation officer from each pilot county, three statewide juvenile justice consultants, and staff from the DHS OCYF’s Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services participated in a three-day SPEP training at the Child Welfare Training Center in Mechanicsburg.

This training provided a foundation in research that demonstrated the value of using an evidence-based approach to improving juvenile justice programs. It was followed by “kick-off” events held in each county for their local juvenile justice practitioners, including judges, supervisors, and providers. The group then participated in on-the-ground “shadowing” experiences, observing Jeff Gregro as he led SPEP interviews with Berks County providers.

Since that time, the members of this group have been actively implementing SPEP in their jurisdictions, working closely with the SPEP developers at Vanderbilt University, Drs. Mark Lipsey and Gabrielle Chapman, and the Pennsylvania SPEP Advisory Group to understand what is needed to take SPEP to scale. EPISCenter’s primary role has been to learn and understand what the SPEP process looks like in real-world practice, and based on that experience develop resources and trainings to support its implementation. We have worked in close collaboration with Vanderbilt since January 2014 to identify and describe barriers, and to develop strategies for addressing them.

Learning Community
To continue building the partnerships that are crucial to the SPEP process, and provide a structure for training and sustainability planning, the EPISCenter has facilitated the formation of a learning community to discuss issues related to SPEP. The Learning Community meets quarterly and includes Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs), technical assistance (TA) providers, juvenile justice consultants, service providers, and SPEP developers.

SPEP Advisory Group
The SPEP Advisory Group coordinates and oversees the SPEP process in PA. It is comprised of members of state agencies (PCCD, JCJC, BJJS), EPISCenter staff, PA Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers and representatives from the five county juvenile probation departments involved in the pilot phase. The Advisory Group meets routinely to discuss strategies and address challenges related to the SPEP roll out in Pennsylvania. The group tracks the roll out progress through the review of data collection and provides guidance on the creation of resources, training, and timeline for expansion of the roll out.
SPEP Resource Development
Part of EPISCenter’s role in SPEP is to produce high quality, informative materials to support SPEP roll out. In many cases the SPEP Learning Community members actively contribute to and inform resource development. Examples include:

- One-page fact sheets on each of the 14 service types in SPEP.
- Logic model of SPEP activities, including short- and long-term outcomes leading to reduced recidivism.
- Detailed outline of the SPEP process, from start to finish, that includes objectives, tasks, resources needed, and indicates the stakeholder responsible for each task.
- Performance Improvement Plan Guide and Template designed to support probation and provider in achieving and sustaining improvements.

See EPISCenter’s full appendix of SPEP and juvenile justice resources at http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/juvenile/appendix.

SPEP Trainings and Outreach
- Webinar Series:
  - The Partnership & The Process
  - Tips for Probation and Providers
  - Classifying Service Types
  - Creating and Understanding Logic Models for Juvenile Justice Programs
  - Data Collection: Scoring Duration, Dosage, and Risk Level
  - SPEP in PA Question & Answer Session

- Outreach at Chiefs-Providers Meetings and JJSES Provider Workgroup
  - As part of Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy, a subgroup of service providers, chief juvenile probation officers and statewide policymakers meet routinely to discuss the progress counties are making with JJSES, as well as to inform the group of the SPEP roll out and solicit feedback on challenges and suggestions for improvement. The PA Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers also has a larger committee that consists of chief juvenile probation officers and service providers that meet quarterly to discuss areas of mutual concern or interest on a broader level than just JJSES.
  - SPEP training and presentations have occurred at meetings for both the JJSES Provider Workgroup and the Chiefs/Providers Committee. EPISCenter staff have routinely attended both meetings during the past year. Their role is to provide information on the roll out of SPEP in the five pilot counties and to answer questions as they arise.

- Conference Presentations
  - “SPEP-eration: What a Service Provider Needs to Know” presentation on SPEP at the 2013 PA Conference on Juvenile Justice, held annually in November.
  - Regular attendance, presentations and updates by the EPISCenter SPEP staff at each of the regional Communities That Care coalition meetings.
  - Regular attendance at the PA Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers’ General Membership meetings.

- Website
  - The EPISCenter website (http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/juvenile) contains many resources on the SPEP process including everything from research articles to local resources or documents created to inform juvenile justice personnel about SPEP, or to facilitate the SPEP roll out as it moves forward.
Summary Report

July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014

On average, EPISCcenter Supported:

189 Total Sites

- 70 Community Prevention Coalitions
- 63 Evidence-based Intervention Teams
- 56 Evidence-based Prevention PCCD Grantees

Technical Assistance

to Evidence-based Prevention & Intervention Programs and Coalitions

- July-Sept 2013: 442
- Oct-Dec 2013: 456
- Jan-March 2014: 474
- April-Jun 2014: 497

1,869 Technical Assistance Requests Fulfilled

From July 2013 - June 2014

- 1,525 Tweets (Twitter messages)
- 36,438 Website visits
- 101,102 Website pageviews
Data Collection and Monitoring

EPISCenter aggregated 317 quarterly reports from 64 providers. All together EPISCenter supported these providers in monitoring the quality and outcomes of 10 EBP model services for 11,086 children and 876 parents.

(Data from 2013-2014 fiscal year roll up for PCCD)
Many thanks to everyone that contributed to the work represented in this report including our state agency partners, community coalitions, evidence-based program providers, research institutions, community agencies, and EPISCenter staff!

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