

# PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) provides funding to expand mental health care for children, youth, adults, and seniors using programs proven to be effective. A portion of the MHSA funds have been set aside to provide Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) services.

## **What are “Prevention & Early Intervention Services”?**

The *Prevention* element of the MHSA PEI component includes programs and services defined by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) as *universal and selective*, and which are designed to help prevent the development of serious emotional or behavioral disorders and mental illness. *Early Intervention* is directed toward individuals and families for whom a short-duration (usually less than one year), relatively low-intensity intervention is appropriate to measurably improve a mental health problem or concern very early in its manifestation, thereby avoiding the need for more extensive mental health treatment or services; or to prevent a mental health problem from getting worse.

Prevention and Early Intervention efforts focus on addressing five key community mental health needs and specific priority populations:

- Disparities in Access to Mental Health Services
- Psycho-Social Impact of Trauma
- At-Risk Children, Youth and Young Adult Populations
- Stigma and Discrimination
- Suicide Risk

## **Anticipated Outcomes PEI Efforts**

Prevention and Early Intervention efforts emphasize strategies to reduce the following negative outcomes that may result from untreated mental illness:

- School failure
- Prolonged suffering
- Incarceration
- Removal of children from homes
- Homelessness
- Unemployment
- Suicide

## **Allowable Uses of PEI Funds**

PEI funding is to be used to achieve specific PEI outcomes for individuals, programs/systems and communities. PEI funding is to be used to prevent mental health problems or to intervene early with relatively short duration and low intensity approaches to achieve intended outcomes, *not* for filling gaps in treatment and recovery services for individuals who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness or serious emotional disturbance and their families.