



THE URBAN INITIATIVE

One of DMHAS' four primary goals, as established by Commissioner Kirk, is to **“provide culturally competent and integrated services to persons whose needs are particularly challenging or not being well met in the current system.”** The Urban Initiative established in the New Haven area, is a good example of an innovative program that responds to this goal.

The Urban Initiative is a collaborative effort of several agencies to create a new model of outreach, engagement, and ongoing community support. The program is designed for persons with a primary substance use disorder who are disengaged from services or for whom treatment has not been successful in the past. Special program features include multiple points of immediate access, clear focus on the engagement of persons needing services and multi-agency collaboration.

Collaborating Partners:

APT Foundation	Easter Seals-Goodwill Industries
Catapult Services	Marrakech
Columbus House	South Central Behavioral Health Network
CT Mental Health Center	South Central Crisis Services

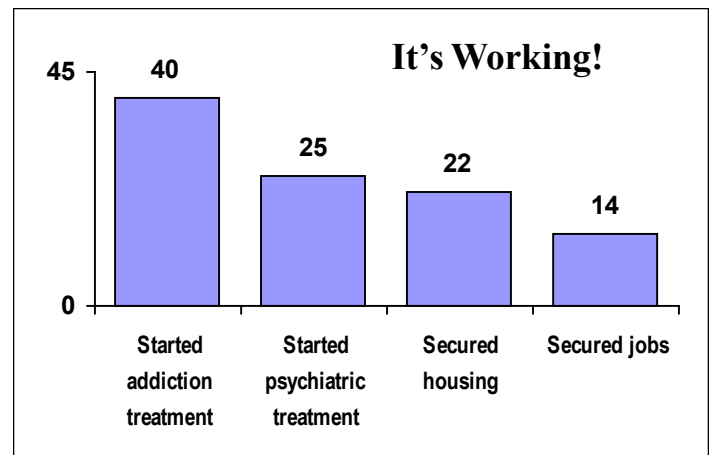
The program has **multiple points of immediate access** to reach out to people who are not currently connected to treatment.

- A 7 day/24 hour **Substance Abuse Help Line** provides access to treatment, referrals, support, and other Urban Initiative programs. The phone line has Spanish and English language capacity.
- **Catapult Services** provides transportation for persons who call the Crisis Line and need immediate help, as well as for persons already involved with the Urban Initiative.
- **The Taking Initiative Center** includes a coffee shop, laundry services, computer classes and recovery groups, as well as on-site staff who assist with entitlements, vocational assessment and support.
- **The Case Management Program** follows up on crisis calls and also reaches out to persons on the street, in soup kitchens and shelters, and at the Taking Initiative Center.

The Urban Initiative focuses on **engaging persons** who may not yet be ready to consider treatment. Through case management engagement strategies and the helpful environment of the Taking Initiative Center, many persons who were originally unwilling to address their addiction have been motivated to seek treatment and remain in recovery. The program offers a non-confrontational approach, the development of a trusting relationship, a full complement of services, and long-term assistance with issues such as housing, employment, and mental health.

Integration of services is accomplished because of the determination and conviction of the **collaborating agencies**. Varied perspectives and skills are brought together by Urban Initiative agencies and their staff; this contributes to a broad vision and effective services.

Outcomes for 93 persons who visited the **Taking Initiative Center** two or more times through January 31, 2002:



Next Steps:

- Comprehensive staff training in assessing a person's needs, identifying potential resources (e.g. social, vocational, financial), and using effective treatment strategies.
- Additional case management support to respond to successful outreach efforts.