



## News Release

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### Proposed Funding Levels Push Community Mental Health System to Brink of Collapse

Many Ohioans with mental illness will be unable to access treatment services in their communities if Governor Strickland's FY 2010-2011 budget framework on the community mental health system is approved. In a new report issued today, **The Center for Community Solutions** analyzes the impact of proposed budget cuts on the mental health system. The report is available online at [www.CommunitySolutions.com](http://www.CommunitySolutions.com).

Overall General Revenue Fund (GRF) reductions, coupled with growth in the Medicaid program and an increasing number of offenders committed to state hospitals for treatment by the court system, will leave little for non-Medicaid services. Once Medicaid and state hospital costs are factored out, each county board will be left with an average of \$324,000 per year to provide non-Medicaid services—services that are critical to help mentally ill individuals remain in the community and actively participate in society.

In addition to proposed cuts, provider rates have not changed since 1997, resulting in a loss of skilled mental health workers, decreased system capacity, and decreased access to services for consumers.

"The convergence of these factors threatens to destabilize what was once considered to be one of the best community mental health systems in the country," said **Jon Honeck**, Ph.D., public policy fellow at Community Solutions. "The domino effect will be tremendous. Failure to treat individuals with mental illnesses will result in increased emergency room use, increased hospitalization, and increased expenses in the criminal justice system. Ohio can't afford cuts that will bring our community mental health system to the brink of collapse."

*The Center for Community Solutions is a private, independent, nonprofit organization focused on policy and system reform. It provides strategic leadership to improve targeted health, social, and economic conditions. Established in 1913, it is a United Way agency.*

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