Greetings from Alliance Behavioral Healthcare

Greetings from Alliance Behavioral Healthcare on the heels of what has been a whirlwind of activity and transition in FY13, resulting in better services and outcomes for the people we serve. We are pleased to share with you Alliance’s first Annual Report.

On the facing page you can read more about the journey that transformed The Durham Center and the Wake County LME, along with our partners in Cumberland and Johnston counties, into North Carolina’s largest public behavioral health managed care organization. We’ll detail some of the challenges that Alliance met head-on as we implemented Medicaid waiver operations within a region encompassing an expansive provider network and a population of some 1.7 million people.

You’ll hear about the divestiture of services in Wake County that resulted in an exciting new partnership with UNC Health Care and the transfer of nearly 3000 consumers to the care of an impressive group of private providers. In Cumberland County, another promising partnership with Cape Fear Valley Health System laid the foundation for enhanced crisis and treatment options for citizens there.

We’ll also tell you about a number of critical initiatives that cut across county lines, including our housing programs, strategies to reduce the utilization of hospital emergency departments and State psychiatric hospitals, and the initiation of an “open access” model that is helping to ensure more immediate access to time-sensitive care.

We could not have attained this level of achievement without the guidance of our outstanding Board of Directors, as well as the support of the Boards of County Commissioners and the County Managers and their staffs from our four counties. We thank them all, along with our exceptional staff, the Alliance Consumer and Family Advisory Committee, and our providers, partners and colleagues throughout the Alliance region. FY14 promises to be yet another year of growth and evolution as our state moves towards Medicaid reform. We fully anticipate that Alliance will be an important part of that process and we look forward to reporting to you again next year.

Ellen S. Holliman
Chief Executive Officer

Lascel Webley, Jr.
Alliance Board Chair
Growing Our Staff

At Alliance, our people are our most important asset. During its first year of operations Alliance grew from a professional staff of 142 to nearly 350. Staff making the transition to Alliance from The Durham Center and the LMEs in Wake, Cumberland and Johnston counties formed the nucleus and brought with them invaluable expertise and experience. From that point staffing more than doubled to accommodate MCO operations.

Stakeholder Participation

Alliance assembled a vibrant, engaged Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) and Provider Advisory Council representing the four counties in its region. Existing CFACs and PACs in each county continue to meet locally and offer feedback to the corporate advisory groups.

Members of the Alliance CFAC collaborated in the choosing of providers to assume the services previously provided by Wake County and participated in Alliance’s Board Budget Retreat. They carried their concerns to local legislators about the needs of our communities and served as respected voices at the State CFAC level.

2000 Credentialed Providers

Expanding Our Scope

July 1, 2012

- The Durham Center and the Wake County LME merge to create Alliance Behavioral Healthcare.
- The Cumberland and Johnston LMEs contract with Alliance to perform a variety of managed care responsibilities in those counties and their citizens become part of the Alliance region.
- A new corporate headquarters near RTP begins operation and offices are maintained in all four counties to house staff that work closely with local stakeholders.

February 1, 2013

- Alliance begins managed care operations under Medicaid 1915 (b)/(c) waivers, with responsibility for approximately 186,000 individuals eligible for Medicaid and a total population in excess of 1.7 million.
- Over 900 providers are credentialed and enrolled initially in the Alliance Provider Network.

March 2013

- Alliance reorganizes to create a more integrated infrastructure promoting collaboration and consistency across the organization, enhancing support to the community offices, and creating a single point of accountability for each functional area.

End of FY13

- Alliance merges with the Cumberland County LME in a process that is largely seamless for the citizens of that county, and its staff become employees of Alliance.
- Network now includes over 2000 credentialed providers.
**Building a Vibrant Provider Network**

Alliance depends on a strong and diverse network of agencies and group practices, licensed independent practitioners and hospitals to provide the range of high-quality services and supports required by the densely-populated Alliance region. To meet that goal Alliance considered over 2000 provider applications in a credentialing, enrollment and contracting process that can take up to 20 hours per provider.

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**Timely Payment of Providers**

Prompt payment of provider claims is an Alliance priority. Since the implementation of waiver operations we paid 99% of claims in a timely manner, and have been consistent in providing training and technical support to providers to ensure submission of error-free claims.

**Ensuring Access to Care**

The 24-hour Alliance Access and Information Center processed 90,000 calls from consumers, community and hospital-based behavioral and general healthcare providers, and other stakeholders and partners. Alliance professionals in the Access and Information Center play an important role in coordinating care and ensuring that individuals are engaged in appropriate treatment. They serve as critical liaisons to hospital emergency departments, resulting in shorter stays or diversion to less-intensive settings when appropriate.

**Informing Our Communities**

Alliance reached thousands of stakeholders and partners across the region by sponsoring over 100 opportunities to learn about our mergers, Medicaid waivers and managed care operations.

**24 Hour Toll-Free Access and Information**

(800) 510-9132
Being There in Time of Crisis

Alliance prioritizes its work to reduce the need for emergency department admissions for persons with a primary diagnosis of MH/DD/SA and to reduce the number of individuals needing three or more crisis services in a twelve month period.

New Partnerships Enhance Crisis and Assessment Centers
UNC Health Care and Cape Fear Valley Health System partnered with Alliance to assume operation of the Crisis and Assessment Centers in Wake and Cumberland counties respectively, strengthening crisis capacity in those communities.

Expanded Use of Crisis Intervention Teams
Crisis Intervention Team training teaches police officers, firefighters, EMS technicians and other emergency responders the skills to recognize and respond appropriately to individuals in behavioral health crisis. They learn to de-escalate dangerous situations and refer individuals, when appropriate, to treatment instead of emergency departments or jail.

Over 1400 have received the training, including 369 during FY13

Decreased Admissions to Emergency Departments
Alliance Care Coordinators embedded in hospital EDs are able to monitor admissions with a primary behavioral health diagnosis, facilitate shorter stays and ensure linkages to follow-up care upon discharge. These interventions increase the likelihood of successful outcomes for our consumers.

+ ED admissions down 9% during the first three quarters of FY13 from the same period the previous year, including admissions of high-utilizers of ED services.
+ An initiative that provides intensive care coordination to Durham County’s top 25 high-utilizers reduced their ED admissions by 80% with a six-month cost savings of $186,000.

Reduce State Psychiatric Readmissions
Alliance met established goals of 7% or less for readmissions to State psychiatric facilities within 30 days and 17% or less for readmissions within 180 days
Limited access to routine care can result in increased use of emergency departments and other crisis services. Alliance recognized that some local crisis facilities and hospital emergency departments were reporting longer consumer stays because physicians did not want to discharge consumers fearing they may not receive follow-up care for a week or more.

In response Alliance began encouraging and training providers to implement an Open Access model of outpatient care that allows consumers to see a psychiatrist and obtain needed medications the same day they call for help.

In Wake County, the model was successfully adopted by the agency that assumed the adult outpatient care previously provided by Wake County Human Services, and by most of the larger outpatient providers there.

This rapid access to care reduces the need for consumers to go to an emergency room to get prescriptions filled or to receive non-emergent care. If a consumer does go to an emergency department or crisis facility and does not need an inpatient stay, doctors there can start a consumer on medication and discharge knowing that community follow-up can occur on the same day or within 24 hours.

Open Access has also been adopted by larger practices in Durham County. Alliance is working with Cape Fear Valley Health System in Cumberland County to implement it in its outpatient clinic and to expand this model of service delivery throughout the four-county region.
Wake Service Divestiture

Alliance partnered with Wake County and UNC Health Care to develop a plan to enhance the care available to Wake County citizens and to transition about 3000 individuals from care they were receiving from Wake County Human Services to other qualified providers. This transition was required by Alliance’s contract to manage Medicaid funding.

UNC Health Care assumed operation of the Wake Crisis and Assessment Center and WakeBrook Recovery Center on February 1. UNC also assumed the care for several hundred Wake County adults with a history of frequent inpatient hospitalizations, one or more long-term stays at a State psychiatric hospital, or use of certain types of medication.

A strong group of provider agencies was contracted through a competitive process to assume the other kinds of care that had been provided previously by Wake County.

Outpatient mental health services: Monarch NC
Child mental health services: Hope Services
Sex abuse treatment for children: Triangle Family Services
Forensic mental health services: Fellowship Health Resources
Latino services: Carolina Community Mental Health
Peer drop-in center: Fellowship Health Resources
Supported employment services: Community Partnerships
Community Connections for persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities: Community Partnerships
Services to the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind communities: RHA Health Services
Drug treatment program for pregnant women and mothers with children: UNC Horizons

Alliance staff teamed with Wake County to ensure hundreds of smooth transitions to new providers. These providers have also started relationships with hundreds of other individuals who Wake County had not previously served.
System of Care

Alliance has a long-standing commitment to the System of Care approach as a way of doing business. SOC values and principles reflect a collaborative foundation for comprehensive, person and family-centered, strength-based treatment planning.

Alliance’s unique SOC philosophy utilizes a fully-integrated adult and child model that encompasses the entire life span and the array of supports a person or family needs to be successful in their community.

Each of the Alliance communities supports a strong and thriving Community Collaborative comprised of family members, public and private partners, and other stakeholders. Each Community Collaborative identifies system priorities to improve the quality of life and outcomes for vulnerable citizens and families.

Reaching Out to Our Communities

- Endorsed by the Department of Health and Human Services to offer our innovative “Introduction to System of Care” training to care providers and community partners.
- Care Reviews for children and adults bring together teams of service providers, friends and family to coordinate the comprehensive care that leads to better outcomes.
- Three nationally-certified trainers in Mental Health First Aid, an evidence-based curriculum that reduces stigma, increases community awareness of the signs and symptoms of mental illness, and teaches skills on how to help someone who may be developing a mental health problem.
- “Mental Health 101” training to hundreds of first responders and public school personnel.
- Community presentations on how to access services and supports.
Supporting Youth at the Crossroads

**BECOMING** is Durham County’s award-winning, federally-funded System of Care initiative that supports “transition aged” young adults with serious mental illness and significant life challenges. It helps them develop and achieve life goals through a self-directed planning process, connecting them to education, employment, social/recreational activities, mental healthcare, and other supports and services.

- BECOMING collaborated with Durham Public Schools to host Real World Youth teaching over 200 youth budgeting, banking and life skills to help them make the transition to adulthood.
- 3000 children, youth and community members participated in BECOMING’s National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day activities.
- Twenty young people participated in a Leadership Academy to enhance their public speaking and leadership skills. They went on to share their success stories at community events and presentations and many attended national youth conferences in Washington and Orlando.
- The program reached out to 750 people at 25 community trainings and workshops.

Serving the Military Community

Alliance is an active partner in its region in a range of initiatives designed to heighten awareness of behavioral health resources available to military personnel, veterans and their families. We promote the use of evidence-based practices in screening, assessment and treatment, and advocate for additional resources to fill service gaps.

Our Military/Veterans Services Liaison serves as the Alliance point-of-contact for military affairs. He participates in regular multi-county collaborative meetings developed to enhance access to care and an initiative at Fayetteville State University that offers free screening services to the military community.
Transitions to Community Living

Alliance implemented a Transitions to Community Living initiative to offer adults with mental illness housed in adult care homes and State facilities the option of more community-based, less restrictive care settings as part of North Carolina’s settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice.

We proactively reached out to these individuals to support those who chose to transition to more independent living arrangements in their communities, and to make sure that those who prefer to remain in their current settings receive the evidence-based behavioral healthcare they need.

- During the first five months of the initiative we processed over 170 screening/referrals for individuals to enter adult care homes. These screenings were sent from 15 hospitals.
- In-reach services were provided to over 200 individuals in 17 adult care homes and five adult mental health supervised living group homes.
- 23 individuals were approved for housing slots with seven actually moving into independent housing by June 30, 2013.

Housing

Safe, secure, affordable housing is fundamental to recovery. The Independent Living Initiative provides one-time, short-term financial assistance to adults served by Alliance while working with providers to develop sustainable housing plans. This can include help with rent and security deposits, emergency utility payments, and start-up costs for moving into permanent housing.

In Durham County in FY13, two other long-term supported housing programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development served 26 homeless parents and children and four chronically-homeless individuals.

Stable housing empowers people to improve decision-making skills, become an active member of the community, and successfully address behavioral health issues.

Luther Moore was living in an adult care facility in Cumberland County when Alliance contacted him to ask if he’d want help to transition to his own apartment. He did, and the Transitions to Community Living initiative provided housing assistance and furniture, connections to mental and physical health care, help with transportation, and other services and supports.

“I feel good, like a real man. I have my own freedom. I am peaceful.”
Almost 50% of the participants in Alliance’s HUD-funded programs are under age 12.

Homeless children spend their formative years without the basic resources needed for mental, physical, emotional and social development. Our help gives them the residential stability needed to have more productive school and social outcomes.

Achievements in Information Technology

- Implemented the state’s only MCO Provider Helpdesk allowing members of the provider network to access live telephone representatives for technical assistance and support related to IT, billing and claims, utilization management and other concerns.

The Helpdesk responded to more than 30,000 calls in FY13

- Developed a business intelligence analysis and reporting platform that allows Alliance to more effectively shape its clinical practices and business operations in response to key data trends.
- Worked closely with 295 provider agencies and 21 billing clearinghouses to ensure that providers are able to submit claims electronically allowing more timely, accurate payments.

Alliance met or exceeded all requirements of Senate Bill 208 governing the performance of LME-MCOs:

- Financial reports submitted in accordance with our Medicaid contract.
- Ratio of current assets to current liabilities at 1.35 for FY13, exceeding the 1.0 requirement every month.
- 99% of claims paid in a timely manner; training and technical support supplied to providers to ensure submission of error-free claims.
- Successful sending and receiving of HIPAA-required data files.
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