



Brattleboro Retreat

Summary of Strategic Initiatives

In 2010, the Brattleboro Retreat helped over 5,000 children, adolescents and adults (numbers that have been rising every year) through a multitude of programs, services, and facilities, offering a comprehensive continuum of care across the lifespan. The impact of the Retreat's services upon its patients and their families is often dramatic and life-saving, and there are fewer and fewer organizations offering such a complete array of resources in behavioral healthcare. At the same time, the number of patients coping with mental health and substance abuse issues continues to rise throughout the region and the nation, and new methods of treating these patients are constantly being developed and refined. The Retreat has striven successfully to augment and modernize its programs and facilities to ensure that its patients benefit from the latest developments in treatment. In 2010, the Retreat saw a 23.4% increase in inpatient admissions, the largest increase in several years.

The Brattleboro Retreat implemented a three year strategic plan spanning 2007 – 2009. The first year, 2007, focused on “Blocking and Tackling,” ensuring that all key processes were functioning optimally. Highlights from 2007 included a focus on safety and regulatory compliance, the redesign and renovation of the admissions area and implementation of the Juran Model of quality improvement.

In the second year, 2008, the Retreat completed a comprehensive re-branding program, continued its focus on safety, completed renovations of three inpatient areas: the adolescent inpatient, general adult psychiatric and co-occurring disorders programs and launched a philanthropic effort. Throughout the renovations, the Retreat focused on assuring that our environment of care provides the dignity, safety and beauty that our legacy requires. These renovations provide a more pleasant environment for staff and patients, an environment that supports patient care.

Renovations continued in 2009, the third year of the strategic plan, with the relocation of the child inpatient program. The new unit features more flexible group spaces, a central nursing station, sensory rooms and a family visiting room. The Retreat has a unique role as the only mental health hospital for children and adolescents in the state of Vermont. This renovation created a state of the art program for Vermont children ages 4 – 12 who require hospitalization. It reflects the Retreat's commitment to children and to ensuring access to state of the art mental health treatment for Vermont children.

The Retreat opened two new programs in 2009, both of which contributed substantially to the Retreat's success in 2010. These programs are key components of the Retreat's strategic plan. The first, an inpatient program for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), opened in July. This 15 bed unit provides LGBT individuals the opportunity to receive the care they need in an affirming, inclusive environment, free from prejudice. The second program, for Uniformed Service Workers, opened in August, 2009. This program provides trauma and substance abuse care for police, fire, EMS, correctional officers, veterans and others who are traumatized in the line of duty.

2010 was a year of "unprecedented times." Census grew in all Retreat programs as the initiatives implemented in prior years came to fruition. Inpatient admissions grew an unprecedented 23.4%. This growth was largely the result of increasing demand for adult services and the ability of the Retreat's re-designed admission process to admit people in need of care safely and efficiently.

Consequently, the Retreat focused on stabilizing the gains made over the past few years and ensuring that the resources were in place to meet rising demand. This meant ensuring that all core processes to admit and treat patients were strong, that adequate resources and supports for employees were in place, facility needs are met and quality is at its highest. Approximately 45 new positions were added in 2010, virtually all direct care positions.

The Retreat also began a new strategic planning process in 2010, setting our goals for the next three years. This process included gathering data and feedback from as many sources as possible. Key items addressed in the strategic plan are: ensuring quality services, ensuring financial stability for the future, investing in information technology including an electronic medical record, facilities improvements and planning for continued growth. The Retreat anticipates opening a new 15 bed program for young adults in 2010.

Summary of Process for Openness and Public Participation

The Brattleboro Retreat keeps the community informed with regular appearances and/or membership with the Brattleboro Selectboard, Building a Better Brattleboro, Brattleboro Development and Credit Corporation, Brattleboro Chamber of Commerce, the Windham County Legislative Delegation, and ongoing collaboration with other community organizations including Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Healthcare and Rehabilitation Services, Rescue Inc., the Police Department, and area schools. In addition to its regular treatment and professional education services, the Brattleboro Retreat offers numerous programs to the community free of charge, including the Wellness in Windham County series, co-sponsored with Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Brattleboro Area Hospice & Brooks Memorial Library, and various lectures, films, forums, and special educational events open to the community. The feedback of patients, their families, and community members is of great importance to the Brattleboro Retreat.

The Retreat also partnered with United Way of Windham County, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, the Alliance for Building Community and the local Agency of Human Services

to jointly conduct a community needs assessment. This assessment was completed in 2009. The needs assessment included mental health and addiction treatment needs in the area, which are the services the Retreat provides. The assessment included a random phone survey, focus groups designed to be inclusive of different populations and key stakeholder interviews. A comprehensive review of existing data was also undertaken. This assessment provides useful community information for the Retreat, our partners and other agencies. The Retreat utilizes this information in an ongoing way and will incorporate it into our 2010 – 2013 strategic planning process. Complete copies of the Community Needs assessment can be found at: <http://unitedwaywindham.org>.

The Retreat also began a market survey in late 2010. This survey of mental health professionals from throughout Vermont and the other New England states will provide the Retreat with additional information about unmet needs in the region. This data is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2010.

Strategic Plan and Financial Information

The Brattleboro Retreat spends approximately \$1 million per year on capital improvements. The depreciation schedule generally amounts to \$1.3 million. As a private not-for-profit organization, copies of the strategic plan are not publicly available. Questions regarding any strategic planning issue or opportunities for public input may be addressed to Julia Sorensen, MBA, MSW, Director of Marketing and Communications.

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