

# SAMS HORIZONS

Welcome to the first edition of SAMS HORIZONS, the SAMS newsletter. Our goal is to keep you, our readers, informed about what is happening as we progress through the implementation of SAMS.

ISSUE 01 JUNE, 2010

## West Virginia SAMS: Reflections on Implementation Progress

By Todd Holder

*ACTION for Child Protection, Inc. and*

*The National Resource Center for Child Protective Services*

**"If you want to get somewhere you have to know where you want to go and how to get there. Then never, never, never give up."**

*-Norman Vincent Peal*

Two weeks ago I traveled to Washington, DC for a Federal Demonstration Grantee's meeting for Comprehensive Family Assessment. While at the meeting there was quite a bit of a buzz about the tremendous work going on in West Virginia in implementing a systematic, comprehensive approach to intervention. Clearly the word was out that West Virginia has set worth on a major initiative, or perhaps to put it better, a major mission to successfully implement SAMS statewide. There were of course questions from meeting participants about the SAMS approach. There were comments that suggested that people were impressed and encouraged by some of the preliminary data coming out of West Virginia related to early changes in practice and decision-making. The topic of most interest however, related to West Virginia's strategic approach to implementation. When I was asked to share my opinions related to West Virginia's approach to implementation, I offered the following observations:

The leadership in West Virginia has been throughout this implementation effort committed to system change; There is clarity regarding what West Virginia wants to see change relate to practice and decision-making as a result of implementing SAMS;

There is an accurate vision regarding the scope of implementation and a highly rigorous plan for achieving implementation success; and perhaps most importantly

The managers, supervisors and staff that I have had the opportunity to work with thus far in implementing SAMS have been open to change, committed to a high standard of performance in their work, diligent in their professional development, persistent in the face of barriers and creative when confronting implementation challenges.

**And these are the influences and characteristic that will ultimately make the difference.**

### SAMS VISION:

A systematic and effective continuum of safety assessment and intervention decision-making from receipt of referral to case closure.

### SAMS MISSION:

The successful implementation of SAMS resulting in an improved system of intervention based on consistent standards; focused and efficient information collection; and a family-centered approach that will improve caregiver and family functioning and increase child safety, permanency, and well-being.



For more information on FACTS  
SAMS changes:  
<http://www.wvfacts.org/WVFACTS/learning/samsdev.aspx>



## West Virginia Demonstrates Best Practices in Early Stages of SAMS Implementation

By Cathy E. Fisher, MSW, LCSW-C, Project Director  
Atlantic Coastal Child Welfare Implementation Center

West Virginia is implementing SAMS (Safety Assessment and Management System) using state of the art implementation strategies with the support of the Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center (ACCWIC). As ACCWIC Project Director, I would note that West Virginia is setting the stage to become one of the nation's leaders in building the capacity of their organization to effectively implement sustainable systems change in child welfare.

West Virginia can attribute success to several factors including high level leadership engagement. Commissioner Jason Najmulski has had significant involvement with the planning and implementation of SAMS and his visibility has been important to staff, demonstrating his commitment to the implementation in the field. In addition, stakeholder involvement has been heavily incorporated in planning and feedback on implementation in the early stages. West Virginia's strategic use of readiness data to guide change management has been useful in preparing upcoming regions for SAM's implementation. Overarching strong project management by the implementation and steering committees at the State office has successfully guided both planning and implementation.

Critical to maintaining fidelity to the SAMS model, the Special Forces trained and supported by ACCWIC partner ACTION for Child Protection have demonstrated their strength through expert coaching and support to supervisors and caseworkers in the field. "West Virginia's strategy of integrating fidelity monitoring as a part of coaching and consultation is demonstrating early success in promoting positive practice changes", says Sarah Kaye, PhD, Director of Research and Evaluation for ACWIC. West Virginia remains on an ambitious timeline and continues to experience success as they implement this new project.



### Commissioner's Corner

As I sit in my corner of the Diamond building, I find myself encouraged and overwhelmed with pride at the ability of BCF staff to move forward with our change to SAMS.

Whatever the cause, change happens frequently and regularly in our workplace. The SAMS initiative is one of the biggest and potentially one of the most influential I've seen in my years with the Bureau. The Bureau for Children and Families (BCF) made a commitment to change the business of Child Protective Services to better serve our families and children of WV. The ability to manage the change is the key our staff is providing. While SAMS is a state of the art, cutting edge model for delivering our services to our customers, you the staff are what make the difference.

We all have a personal responsibility to support the change. Each individual from me, the Commissioner to each of the front line workers and everyone in between must continue to be dedicated and committed to the success of our goals. Thank you for all you do!

John J. Najmulski

If you have ideas or would like to submit an article for our next issue of *SAMS Horizons*, please contact:

**Amy.L.Booth@wv.gov**



### Palma's Points

As the Deputy Commissioner in charge of Field Operations, I am pleased with the positive reports I am receiving as we move forward with SAMS. Early reports from ACCWIC evaluations, Special Forces site reports, Regional and District management, and feedback from many community partners are encouraging, showing the good work being done in the districts that have implemented our new system. I am looking forward to July when the Initial Assessment and the Family Functioning Assessment are being used across the entire state. The work many of you are doing educating our communities continues to improve, but there is always work to be done.

#### Palma's Points for Community Education:

- Make sure you are providing the accurate information when discussing SAMS. Refer to the Community Services Manager and Regional Program Managers.
- Get to know the information provided on SAMS from the intranet and internet.
- Explain that WV Code has not changed and our screening decisions are based on the code definition.
- Discuss the changes in terminology and the changes they may see in the written information we will be providing.

Please know that I appreciate each and every member of our staff and the efforts you make as we move forward in improving the lives of the families we serve.

# SAMS Regional News

## Region I

The Phase I districts, Harrison and Monongalia/Marion are currently in the process of implementing a maintenance plan in order to maintain the fidelity and the quality of the SAMS model.

Phase II implementation began with the following districts: Brooke/Ohio/Hancock, Calhoun/Gilmer/Wirt, and Doddridge/Pleasants/Ritchie district. Currently we are planning for the final ACTION site visit with Phase II which will be held July 1 and July 2. During the Phase II implementation, Special Forces began working with Phase III to do an introduction of SAMS for staff and managers. Phase III will include Wood district and Wetzel/Tyler/Marshall district.

CSMs and Special Forces have continued to provide information to various community organizations and agencies concerning the SAMS model. The CLE trainings have been very well received, and continue to produce positive feedback

## Region II

Phase I has completely implemented SAMS. They are currently working on a maintenance plan. Special Forces and Action reviews are going well. Phase II has rolled out and the counties are adjusting well. Reviews are under way. Phase III is scheduled to roll out June 28th. The supervisors have all completed training. The workers are being trained during June.

Region II Special Forces has new members. Joining Cheryl Salamacha, Jennifer Beckett, Rebecca Farmer, Sandy Wilkerson, Samantha Sayre, Hope Smith are Tonya Webb, Natalie Murphy and Ivy Legg

## Region III

As I reflect on the activities of the last 2 days I find that I am continuously amazed at the staff acceptance and level of commitment to the SAMS model that I see. We are in the second month of

Phase 2 implementation and have just experienced our 2nd consultation with Mike Corey from ACTION for Child Protection. Consultation days are always valuable and a learning experience for staff as well as Special Forces. I don't believe that I have ever come away from any consultation consulting without personally gaining something from the experience. What I can say about Region III and the SAMS implementation process is that we are all learning and making philosophical shifts in our practice and at times giving it more than 100%. Staff are open and committed and I get to see good practice as well as growth in the application of SAMS. Thank you Region III for all of your hard work and commitment!

## Region IV

In Region IV, Wyoming and Raleigh were our Phase 1 districts. They continue to work diligently towards making the SAMS model work in their counties. Special Forces members meet with them on a monthly basis in reviewing and consulting on intake assessments and family functioning assessments. Special Forces will assist these counties in developing their own formal maintenance plan that will ensure continued fidelity to the SAMS model and quality assessments for family and children.

McDowell, Mercer, and the Greenbrier/Summers/Monroe/Pocahontas districts are our Phase 2 counties. Special Forces members meet weekly with each district in order to discuss implementation issues and provide reviews and consults on both intake and family functioning assessments.

Region IV has welcomed, CPS Supervisor, Patricia Cook, as the newest member of our Special Forces Team. Patricia supervises in Wyoming County and was a part of the first roll-out of the SAMS model in Region IV. Region IV has also scheduled five presentations for our legal community in order to introduce our Attorneys and Judges to the SAMS's philosophy and model. To date, we have presented in Braxton County and Raleigh County and the remaining three (3) presentations are scheduled before the end of April 2010.



## STARS light the way of success for SAMS

### Region II Shining Star: Meaghan Newton Why She Shines: Positive Attitude



Meaghan Newton has been with the Department of Health and Human Resources as a Child Protective Service Worker since 2007. She strives to do her best in all aspects of her job. Meaghan adapted very well to the SAMS model and willingly utilized the Special Forces for

guidance. The first FFA completed by Meaghan was reviewed by Action and found to be excellent. Action took the FFA to Alabama to use as an example.

### Region III Shining Star: Nikki Watton Why She Shines: Commitment to Success



Nikki Watton, CPS Supervisor in Barbour, Taylor, and Preston counties was at the helm when SAMS rolled out in Region III. She has a Master's degree in Social Work, is a ten year veteran of the Department, and is a member of SAMS Special Forces. Nikki dedicated herself to

the implementation, creating a resource guide, working numerous hours above what was required, and postponed a medical procedure until after implementation so she could guide her district in the Phase 1 roll out. Her recognition as a "shining star" is a reflection not only of her commitment and determination to implement SAMS successfully, but to her staff, who have gone above and beyond during the first six months of the implementation. They have come together as a cohesive, impressive unit during the implementation.

### Region IV Shining Star: James Rhodes Why He Shines: Top Notch FFA



James Rhodes has been selected as Region IV's shining star from the Phase 1 roll-out of SAMS. James is a Family Functioning Assessment Worker from Raleigh County and is supervised by Kim Lacy. Additionally, James had one of the first FFAs reviewed by ACTION and Special

Forces during Raleigh's site visit/consultation. During this consultation, James received recognition from Todd Holder of ACTION on the quality of his FFA. The assessment that James completed was excellent and Mr. Holder requested a copy of that particular assessment so that it could be used by others as an example.

*Region I STAR was unavailable at time of print and will be featured in the next edition of SAMS HORIZONS.*

# Implementation Updates

## Upcoming Events and Meetings on SAMS Implementation.

6/10 – 7/10

Workshops and a Panel Presentation on SAMS will be featured at the West Virginia Court Improvement Board Cross-Training Conferences for judges, attorneys, staff, and providers.

6/14/10 – 6/16/10

Jason Najmulski, Louis Palma, Susan Richards, Amy Booth, Toby Lester, and Todd Holder will be making a presentation about SAMS at the Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center (ACCWIC) Forum in Annapolis, Maryland for representatives from all the states in Federal regions 3 and 4.

6/14/10 – 6/18/10

Action for Child Protection will be in West Virginia to do pre-implementation consultation with Phase 3 districts.

6/28/10

Phase 3 districts will implement the SAMS Intake Assessment and Family Functioning Assessment.

7/10 – 9/10

Action for Child Protection will be training supervisors on a guide they developed called the *Supervisory Consultation Guide: Directing Practice and Decision-Making during the Family Functioning Assessment*.

7/01/10

SAMS Implementation Team Meeting in Charleston, 1:30pm.

7/09/10

SAMS Communication Committee Meeting in Charleston, 2:00pm.

7/23/10

SAMS Special Forces Oversight Committee Meeting in Charleston, 2:00pm.

7/26/10 – 7/30/10

Action for Child Protection will be in West Virginia to provide post-implementation consultation for Phase 3 districts.

8/16/10 – 8/19/10

Training will begin for Special Forces on the Protective Capacities Family Assessment (PCFA).

8/30/10 – 9/03/10

Action for Child Protection will be in West Virginia to provide the second round of post-implementation consultation with the Phase 3 districts.

# SAMS Implementation Phases

## Phase 1

Region I: Mon/Marion; Harrison

Region II: Kanawha

Region III: Preston/Barbour/Taylor

Region IV: Raleigh; Wyoming

## Phase 2

Region I: Ohio/Brooke/Hancock; Ritchie/Pleasants/ Doddridge; Calhoun/Gilmer/Wirt

Region II: Cabell; Putnam; Wayne; Lincoln

Region III: Upshur/Lewis; Randolph/Tucker

Region IV: Mercer; McDowell; Greenbrier/Summers/ Monroe/Pocahontas

## Phase 3

Region I: Marshall/Tyler/Wetzel; Wood

Region II: Boone; Jackson/Roane/Mason; Logan; Mingo

Region III: Grant/Hardy/Pendleton; Hampshire/Mineral; Berkeley/Jefferson/Morgan

Region IV: Fayette; Nicholas/Webster; Braxton/Clay



## Future Implementation Dates to Remember:

6/28/10	Phase 3 IA and FFA Implementation
11/15/10	FACTS IA and FFA Turns On
12/06/10	Phase 1 PCFA and CPE Implementation
3/28/11	Phase 2 PCFA and CPE Implementation
7/25/11	Phase 3 PCFA and CPE Implementation

## SAMS Implementation Committee

Susan Richards	Kathie King
Amy Booth	Toby Lester
Louis Palma	Tracy Dean
Cheryl Salamacha	Todd Holder, Action
Brenda McPhail	Cathy Fisher, ACCWIC

# SAMS HORIZONS

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