



Merakey's Dual Diagnosis Treatment Team (DDTT)

Issue to be Addressed:

People with coexisting mental health (MH) diagnosis and an intellectual/developmental disability (IDD) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often face complex emotional, behavioral, physical, and social challenges. These issues complicate support efforts for families, providers, and community services. They frequently interact with various service systems, including state and local human service departments, their county of residence, and multiple service providers, leading to a fragmented, multi-siloed approach that is not beneficial for the person.

Barriers to serving people with complex needs include Medicaid eligibility, funding shortages, inefficient reimbursement models, inconsistent oversight, and high service costs. Insufficient support can lead to significant expenses for county and state systems, particularly due to long-term or frequent use of higher levels of care like state institutions and psychiatric inpatient hospitalization. The daily cost of psychiatric inpatient care is substantial, especially when people lose their community placement upon discharge.

Plan for Addressing Issue:

Merakey's Dual Diagnosis Treatment Team (DDTT) offers an innovative solution for people dually diagnosed with MH/IDD or MH/ASD. DDTT provides comprehensive services to this population at risk of losing community living opportunities or reintegrating from inpatient, state hospital, or state center admissions. It addresses their personal needs during acute episodes and assists transitions back to the community, supporting community living and maximizing stabilization.

DDTT is a voluntary, community-based treatment model focused on crisis intervention, hospital diversion, and community stabilization. It delivers integrated case management,

medication monitoring/management, behavioral assessment, psychiatry, and comprehensive behavioral support planning. The team conducts robust assessments, develops safety/crisis plans, and coordinates with physical health services.

The team comprises subject matter experts who ensure coordinated service delivery using positive approaches philosophy and evidence-based practices like Illness Management and Recovery, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, and Dialectic Behavioral Therapy. DDTT employs assertive engagement strategies, involving the person's support system, including providers, primary care physicians, county offices, insurance organizations, and family members, to ensure collective communication and shared information. With a high staff-to-participant ratio, DDTT offers intensive support and is available to people weekdays, evenings, weekends, and holidays, along with 24/7 crisis response services.

Eligibility for Services:

18 years or older for a standard team or 11-18 for youth & adolescent DDTT; diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder and an intellectual/developmental disability; frequently interact with crisis services or hospitalizations; at risk of losing community housing/supports; and need assistance with transitioning back to the community from higher levels of care.

Expected Outcomes:

Reduced ER admissions and inpatient hospitalizations; decreased use of county crisis services; increased community tenure in safe, affordable housing; improved skill acquisition; enhanced engagement in meaningful activities; and transfer of life/coping skills to natural and paid supports.

DDTT significantly reduces service costs for complex people by diverting them from higher levels of care and increasing community stabilization. Merakey DDTT participants see a

notable reduction in Medicaid spending, with an 87.8% decrease in inpatient psychiatric costs from 2021 to March 2025 in Pennsylvania, dropping from over \$1.5 million to less than \$250,000. DDTT costs vary by location, primarily driven by salaries for subject matter experts.

Estimated Cost:

Please see below for the estimated annual cost summary for a full DDTT team serving 20 individuals in Baton Rouge, LA. Please note costs may vary depending on the location and economic conditions at the time of implementation.

Merakey DDTT Full Team Serving 20 Individuals Annual Budget	
SALARY	Total
Includes 2.2 FTE Indirect and 4 FTE Direct Staff	
TOTAL WAGE	484,765
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS	158,270
TOTAL SALARY	\$ 643,035
OPERATING	
PURCHASED PROVIDERS	324,900
OTHER OPERATING	384,065
TOTAL OPERATING	\$ 708,965
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,352,000

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