Wisconsin’s Re-entry Prevention Model (RPM)

What is the purpose of the Re-entry Prevention Model (RPM)?

During the initial stages of implementation of the Post-Reunification Support (P.S.) Program, there will be more reunified families than available service slots, meaning that not all reunified families will be able to receive services. Therefore, it will be necessary to offer services only to those families who are at highest risk of experiencing a child re-entering care following reunification. To determine which families are at highest risk of re-entry, the evaluation team at the University of Illinois used historical data from eWisACWIS and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) to develop a statistical predictive model to identify which reunified children are most likely to experience a re-entry into care. This model, called the Re-entry Prevention Model, or RPM, will be used in the first phase of implementation to determine a family’s eligibility for P.S. Program services.

How was the RPM developed?

The research team used data from 2012 to determine which combination of factors were most predictive of re-entry into care within 12 months of reunification. Factors were selected from a variety of sources, including family demographic characteristics, placement characteristics, and child and parent information from the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment. A statistical technique known as stepwise logistical regression was used to select the factors that best predicted re-entry. In addition to selecting the combination of factors that best predicted re-entry, it was also necessary to select a “cut-off score” that maximized the accurate predictions (the true positives and true negatives) and minimized the inaccurate predictions (the false positive and false negatives). Decreasing the threshold for eligibility allows more families to be eligible for the program but decreases the accuracy of the prediction.

What were the results?

The model that best predicted re-entry for children reunified in 2012 had four factors:

- If the reunified child had a diagnosed disability as documented in the Person Management page, Characteristics tab, in eWisACWIS. This is constructed from the five AFCARS disability fields which include children with a clinically diagnosed disability in the following federally-derived classifications: developmental disability (mental retardation), visually/hearing impaired, physically disabled, emotionally disturbed, and other medical conditions requiring special care;
- If the child is removed from a single female or male caregiver home at the time of his or her most recent removal. This variable comes from the family structure variable as documented in the Out-of-Home Placement page, Service tab in eWisACWIS;
- The length of time the child was in out-of-home care prior to reunification. This variable was computed as the number of days between the date of removal and the date of discharge to reunification;
- The number of service reports prior to the most recent entry into care. Families with two or more prior screened-in service reports are at significantly increased risk of re-entry.

Each child will receive a single score, which represents his or her probability of re-entry based on a weighted combination of scores on these four factors. In the final model, if a child’s probability score is greater than or equal to .24, she or he would qualify as eligible for P.S. Program services. Using the 2012 data, this version of the RPM was very successful in predicting which children re-entered care and which did not.

**What are the advantages of using the RPM to determine eligibility?**

Statistical models do a much better job of predicting future outcomes than even the most well-trained clinicians. Other examples of risk models include structured risk assessment instruments and actuarial insurance tables. Use of the RPM to determine P.S. Program eligibility will ensure that those families at highest risk of re-entry are offered the enhanced services the P.S. Program will provide, instead of relying on family characteristics that might be unrelated to risk.

By providing those children and families who are most at risk with an enhanced array of case management, services, and supports, the goal of the P.S. Program is to reduce re-entry and decrease the trauma associated with multiple placements into out of home care. Furthermore, this anticipated reduction in re-entry is also likely to generate savings that state and county agencies will use to reinvest to grow the program and serve more reunifying children and families in future years.

30% of caseload. Milwaukee already online and being utilized.