Dear Local Collaborative Members,

When we began the Legislative Priorities process for 2010, some of you expressed concern about undertaking a process of identifying priorities at a time when we expected little growth and likely budget reductions. Containment measures and reductions have already been felt and there is a great likelihood of continued budget difficulties in 2011. Your concerns continue to be real and challenging.

We are beginning the Legislative Priority process for 2011, and we want to hear from you about your communities' needs and priorities. We also want to benefit from your thinking and experience as we face especially difficult budget decisions and cost containment measures. We need your advice about your communities as both the Executive and the Legislative Branches of state government face complex and challenging decisions throughout the year ahead and in the 2011 Legislative Session.

From our four years of experience with this legislative priorities process we know that it is important to you to find ways to strengthen consumer and family voices, to grow community based services, to maintain your local provider base, and to build adult, child and adolescent systems of care. In times when resources were available for growth many of you had specific recommendations for local priority projects that are new and innovative or serve people in different ways or address particular gaps in your community such as needs for crisis response systems, supportive housing or transportation.

We know that those needs have not disappeared. But as we think ahead to 2011 our questions need to be different. We recognize they will be harder to answer. We appreciate your efforts to bring us your best advice. Your responses to the questions below will help guide us throughout the year as well during the 2011 Legislative Session. We recognize that your discussions about local priorities will be difficult and would like to assist you in any way that we can. Please share your technical assistance needs through your Cross Agency Team lead.

We also recognize the need to improve our feedback to you about how we use the advice you give us. We want to find ways to give you feedback not only related to bills passed during the Legislative Session, but also feedback about the many other ways your advice on priorities is used throughout the year.

LOCAL PRIORITIZING:

Please prioritize the top 5 critical local services in your area for both children and adult.

[ Choose Five Each ]

If opportunities for new federal grants or other funding arise, what one area of service development would most benefit your community?

[ Choose One ]

Next Steps:
Please answer the questions included in this letter and submit them through your Cross Agency Team lead by April 30, 2010.
We will review them at the May Behavioral Health Planning Council Meeting on May 19, 2010. And present to the Purchasing Collaborative on May 27, 2010.