

IOM Calls for Evidence-Based Screening for Youth, Coordinated Mental Health Efforts

A recent Institute of Medicine and National Research Council report recommends that the federal government expand prevention and early identification of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders in young people. These disorders cost the U.S. an estimated \$247 billion annually. The report cited research that shows several initiatives, including evidence-based screening, are effective at preventing these problems and promoting mental health. The report called for federal leadership in making youth mental health a national priority by setting public prevention goals, increasing funding, and supporting research.

Recommendations for screening:

- A national research plan on prevention of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders in youth should be developed, funded to learn how to implement evidence-based screening and prevention in real world community settings
- Validated screening tools should be used
- Identification of risk must be tied to effective intervention
- Guidelines must be agreed to and in place for referrals

Also Noted:

- Primary care settings, schools and communities provide important opportunities for screening
- Targeting high risk youth (foster care, juvenile justice, youth with depressed parents) is good public health practice

Full report: <http://nationalacademies.org/morenews/20090213.html>