

## **Examining User Experience of the Value Based Payment Initiative**

### **The Community Mental Health Fund**

*Jackson County, Missouri*

#### **Submitted by External Researchers:**

Jody Brook, PhD, MSW/LCSW

Kiley Liming, PhD, MJ

Sophia Mazzetti, MPH

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## Study Overview

This study utilized a mixed methods research design that employed sequential data collection strategies. The first phase of the study consisted of qualitative interviews focusing on the experience of stakeholders that were either internal or internal adjacent consultants. These stakeholders comprise leadership, staff, and consultants to the Community Mental Health Fund (CMHF) who focus on program development and implementation. The second phase, informed by the first, centered on collecting the experiences of agency-based community stakeholders related to their agency's implementation of the Value Based Payment (VBP) system. The final phase of this activity was to present findings from Phases 1 and 2 to the VBP sub-committee of the Board of Directors at the CMHF and solicit their feedback.

### *Phase 1*

The research team conducted seven individual qualitative interviews with a duration of approximately 90 minutes each. These interviews were guided by questions related to the following topics:

- Administrative experiences related to the data submission and receipt process (from the CMHF perspective). Sample questions are:
  - What kinds of feedback are you hearing from individuals at the agencies?
  - Whom are you talking to most frequently? What role do they fulfill?
  - Is there one area that you are hearing feedback about consistently related to data submission?
- Overarching information about the internal workings of the CMHF as it relates to the data submission, site review, and payment processes of the VBP initiative.

The information generated from these individual interviews was placed into a qualitative data repository for analysis and coding. The thematic findings of this work are as follows:

- Communication is siloed, with different stakeholders expressing different needs and preferences (i.e., style, content, format, domain)
- There is an abundance of internal change occurring at the CMHF across several domains, not only the VBP initiative.
  - Various iterations of “overwhelmed by change” were discussed
  - There are new models of operating without clear guidelines or well-defined end points—this makes folks anxious
  - Different information needs were expressed—some want metrics, others want experiences
- The data and operational structure are not stable, and this causes anxiety on the part of internal staff and grantees alike

Working from these thematic findings, the research team, in concert with key stakeholders, constructed a questionnaire administered to community-based stakeholders. It was agreed upon a priori that the introduction to the solicitation would offer potential respondents the opportunity to give feedback in 1 of 3 ways: 1) electronic survey (approximately 20 minutes); 2) individual,

virtual interview with research consultant group (approximately 30-60 minutes); and 3) focus group interview (approximately 90-120 minutes).

### ***Phase 2***

The survey solicitation was active from May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, through May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and was sent to 120 pre-identified individuals across all agencies. In total, 55 individuals voluntarily selected one of the three options to provide feedback: 52 (94.5%) selected survey and 3 (5.5%) selected individual interview. Of the individuals who selected individual interviews, the consultants were only able to successfully execute one individual interview. The survey contained both predetermined answers and responses as well as open text boxes for individualized stakeholder feedback.

Following the completion of the survey data and qualitative analysis of open-text responses, the research team presented the findings to the VBP sub-committee of the CMHF Board of Directors for additional feedback.

### ***Phase 3***

These writers presented the survey findings (detailed below) to the VBP sub-committee on June 25, 2024. Information generated from that meeting indicate that the VBP sub-committee is well versed in the strengths and challenges of the VBP system implementation. Points of discussion included:

- Establishing a clear vision and rewards structure (especially as it relates to financial incentives)
- Affirmation that being transparent about the emerging nature of the VBP system is a good strategy
- The shared power approach used by the CMHF/Consultants in facilitating the development of grantee goals is admirable and working well (even if in developmental infancy)
- This is an iterative model being implemented across a wide variety of stakeholders, it is going to take time
- As grantees are experiencing change, so is the CMHF (parallel process)
- This approach and programming is innovative and should be disseminated.

### **Survey Results**

The survey was electronically administered using Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap), a secure web application designed to support data capture for purposes of research. The survey included demographic and job characteristic variables, along with open (qualitative) and closed (quantitative) ended questions regarding their professional experiences of the Value-Based Payment system implementation thus far.

Of the 52 individuals who responded to the survey, 42 (81%) individuals fully completed the survey; 10 (19%) individuals had partial responses – which were retained and used for analysis. Resultantly, the reader should note that the subsample size by question may vary slightly.

Accordingly, the sample size is provided for each question. Results are organized by survey section and presented below.

Table 1, below, displays respondent demographics and job characteristics. Most survey respondents were White (87%,  $n = 45$ ), non-Hispanic/Latino (92%,  $n = 46$ ) females (83%,  $n = 43$ ). The three most prominent job roles reported were: administrator (39%,  $n = 20$ ), supervisor (23%,  $n = 12$ ), and quality assurance/quality improvement (15%,  $n = 8$ ). These individuals represent 23 community agencies implementing the VBP system within their agency.

In terms of job characteristics, most respondents did not provide direct services (77%,  $n = 40$ ). A large majority of respondents (96%,  $n = 50$ ) were involved with their VBP system, yet only 60% ( $n = 30$ ) had VBP duties codified in their position description. Most respondents reported being employed in their current job for between 1 and 3 years (37%, or  $n = 19$ ). When asked about conducting work that is related to the VBP initiative, 70% (or  $n = 35$ ) of the respondents said that the VBP system did require added tasks to their work, but they benefited from the VBP system.

**Table 1.** Demographic & Job Characteristics

Categorical Variable	Sample (N/n)	Frequency (%)
Biological Sex:	52	
<i>Female</i>		43 (83)
<i>Male</i>		8 (15)
<i>Prefer Not to Answer</i>		1 (2)
Race:	52	
<i>White</i>		45 (87)
<i>Black/African American</i>		4 (8)
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>		1 (2)
<i>Multi-Racial</i>		1 (2)
<i>Prefer Not to Answer</i>		1 (2)
Ethnicity:	50	
<i>Non-Hispanic/Latino</i>		46 (92)
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>		3 (6)
<i>Other</i>		1 (2)
Job Role:	52	
<i>Administrator</i>		20 (39)
<i>Supervisor</i>		12 (23)
<i>Quality Assur./Quality Improv. (QA/QI)</i>		8 (15)
<i>Data Analyst or Other Data Staff</i>		4 (8)
<i>Clinical Provider</i>		3 (6)
<i>Non-Clinical Case Manager</i>		1 (2)
<i>Grants Manager/Writer</i>		1 (2)
<i>Financial/Billing</i>		1 (2)
<i>Other*</i>		2 (4)
Job Length:	52	
<i>6 Months - &lt; 1 Yr.</i>		3 (6)
<i>1 Yr. - &lt; 3 Yrs.</i>		19 (37)
<i>3 Yrs. - &lt; 5 Yrs.</i>		10 (19)
<i>5 Yrs. - &lt; 10 Yrs.</i>		10 (19)
<i>≥10 Yrs.</i>		10 (19)
Provides Direct Services (any capacity)	52	
<i>No</i>		40 (77)
<i>Yes</i>		12 (23)
Involved in VBP System and Related Work	52	
<i>No*</i>		2 (4)
<i>Yes</i>		50 (96)
VBP Duties are in Current Job Description	50	
<i>No</i>		30 (60)
<i>Yes</i>		20 (40)
Which of the following statements best summarizes your work for the VBP system?	50	
<i>The VBP system requires added tasks I don't benefit from</i>		2 (4)
<i>The VBP system requires added tasks I do benefit from</i>		35 (70)
<i>The VBP system does not require any added tasks from me</i>		8 (16)
<i>I am uncertain/have no strong opinion on this</i>		4 (8)
<i>Other, describe below:</i>		1 (2)

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*Notes:* Job Role, Other: CEO (1), Director of Adult and Clinical Service (1); \* = Survey question was associated with a stop indicator; therefore, the survey was terminated for the individuals who responded that they were *not* involved in VBP system work.

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The research team, via the survey, asked individuals a series of questions related to their level of involvement in specific tasks that are main components of the VBP system. These questions, and corresponding responses comprise Table 2. These questions centered around typical activities required to participate in the initiative, including: setting goals and developing indicators, establishing a data structure for tracking, collecting and entering data, and uploading information related to performance. Further, we wanted to know if agencies were using the data to improve agency performance, and how involved they were with communication to the CMHF. These researchers find it noteworthy that, when looking at the column “completely involved in the process”, the number and percentage of those who chose this response varied as the VBP involvement went from conceptual (i.e., goals and KPI development, infrastructure support, using data to improve agency practices) to performing the day-to-day tasks associated with entering their agency VBP data. These authors suspect that this is an artifact of who was solicited for survey completion. This is to say that a number of survey respondents may have been involved in the development of their agency’s VBP system, but they were not involved in the daily/quarterly VBP work.

**Table 2.** Involvement by VBP Task ( $n = 50$ , unless otherwise noted)

<i>As it relates to the VBP system, please rate your involvement in the following:</i>	Completely involved in process	Moderately involved in process	Very limited involvement in process	Not involved at all in process	My agency is not yet at this point
VBP goals and KPI development	33 (66)	11 (22)	6 (12)	0 (0)	0 (0)
VBP data infrastructure for my agency	23 (46)	17 (34)	6 (12)	4 (8)	0 (0)
Collecting/gathering necessary data for the established agency goals and KPIs	19 (38)	16 (32)	7 (14)	8 (16)	0 (0)
Entering data for the established agency goals and KPIs in my agency's spreadsheet (e.g., Excel)	17 (34)	4 (8)	10 (20)	19 (38)	0 (0)
Uploading my agency's goals and KPI data to the CMHF (e.g., SharePoint) ( $n=49$ )	15 (31)	8 (16)	5 (10)	21 (43)	0 (0)
Using my agency's VBP data to improve agency practices (e.g., rapid cycle/quality improvement efforts)	24 (48)	19 (38)	4 (8)	2 (4)	1 (2)
Communicating agency questions about data collection and/or upload to the CMHF.	19 (38)	12 (24)	8 (16)	10 (20)	1 (2)

The researchers also solicited more information about grantee experiences with the VBP system, from initial training to current viewpoints across multiple topical areas. Table 3 below presents the respondents' hindsight perspectives. Survey results indicate that grantees are largely satisfied with the amount of VBP training they have received, and they believe that training has been sufficient. Interestingly, grantees also reported that the goals and KPIs that they selected reflect important areas of practice. Having said this, when asked if they would choose the same goals given the opportunity, 42% ( $n = 20$ ) reported that they would, and 42% ( $n = 20$ ) reported that they would not. For KPIs, the majority of respondents reported that they would not choose the same indicator.

**Table 3.** Respondent's Hindsight Views on Training, Goals, and KPIs (*In Hindsight...*)

<i>...Do you feel that the amount of VBP training was sufficient to successfully carry out your VBP-specific duties? (n= 48)</i>	
<b>Answer Options:</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Yes	41 (85)
No	3 (6)
Did not participate	4 (8)
<b>[FILTERED*] The amount of VBP training I received was: (n = 32)</b>	
Just Right	28 (88)
Too Little	1 (3)
Other	3 (9)
<b>[FILTERED – direct service providers*] In your opinion, do the <i>goals</i> selected reflect the most important areas you see in practice? (n = 11)</b>	
Yes	10 (91)
No	0 (0)
Unsure	1 (9)
<b>[FILTERED – direct service providers*] In your opinion, do the <i>KPIs</i> selected reflect the most important areas you see in practice? (n = 11)</b>	
Yes	9 (82)
No	1 (9)
Unsure	1 (9)
<b><i>...If you could select your agency's initial <i>goals</i> now, would you choose the same <i>goals</i> as you previously did? (n= 48)</i></b>	
Yes	20 (42)
No	20 (42)
Unsure	7 (15)
Not Applicable	1 (2)
<b><i>...If you could select your agency's initial <i>KPIs</i> now, would you choose the same <i>KPIs</i> as you previously did? (n= 48)</i></b>	
Yes	16 (33)
No	20 (42)
Unsure	11 (23)
Not Applicable	1 (2)
<i>Notes. * = Indicates that the respective question was only available to select survey participants based upon answer selection to previous questions.</i>	



Table 4, below, displays findings from the survey questions that center on current perspectives. Importantly, 34% ( $n = 16$ ) of respondents reported that collecting data metrics was *somewhat difficult* for their agency. While an even larger percentage (40%;  $n = 19$ ) reported that collecting data was *somewhat easy*, it is still important to note that some agencies are experiencing it as difficult. Respondents further reported that uploading and reporting the data to the CMHF was *somewhat easy* or *neither difficult nor easy*. This indicates that while collecting the data can be burdensome, uploading and reporting it is not. Only 3 respondents (or 6%) found the process *somewhat difficult*, and none found it *very difficult*. Of note is the survey finding that 63%, or 26 respondents reported that they are using the collected data to improve practices at their agencies. As a final question in this series, the researchers asked agencies to quantify the amount of time they were spending quarterly on the entire process of gathering data, summarizing data, entering data, and submitting data in SharePoint. The mean time was 8.02 hours, with a range of 0 hours to 20 hours per quarter.

**Table 4.** Current views on activities associated with the VBP (*Currently...*)

<i>...In your opinion, how easy is it for your agency to collect the data metrics needed for your agency's KPIs? (n = 47)</i>	
<b>Answer Options:</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Very Easy	3 (6)
Somewhat Easy	19 (40)
Neither Difficult nor Easy	9 (19)
Somewhat Difficult	16 (34)
Very Difficult	0 (0)
<i>...In your opinion, how easy is it for your agency to report and upload the collected data to CMHF (i.e., via Excel and SharePoint)? (n = 47)</i>	
Very Easy	8 (17)
Somewhat Easy	21 (45)
Neither Difficult nor Easy	15 (32)
Somewhat Difficult	3 (6)
Very Difficult	0 (0)
<i>...Are any of your agency's results from the VBP system being used to refine your agency's practice? (n = 41)</i>	
Yes	26 (63)
No	1 (2)
Some	8 (20)
My agency isn't at this point yet	4 (10)
Unsure	2 (5)
<i>[FILTERED*] ...How many hours, on average, does it take for your agency to complete the quarterly VBP data upload process – from start to finish (i.e., gathering data, summarizing data, entering data, and submitting data in SharePoint)? (n = 31)</i>	
<b>Mean (SD) = 8.02 (5.4) Hours</b>	
<b>Range = 20 (Low: 0 Hours – High: 20 Hours)</b>	
<i>Notes.</i> * = Indicates that the respective question was only available to select survey participants based upon answer selection to previous questions.	

Table 5 displays more nuanced information about the amount of time agencies spend on different aspects of the VBP system. Across the domains measured (training, selecting KPIs, data collection, data entering and cleaning, and communicating with the CMHF), respondents report that an appropriate amount of time spent. It is also interesting to note that the data entering, cleaning and submission processes do contain a significant number of respondents who “spend no time on this task”.

**Table 5.** Current Perspective, Time on VBP ( $n = 45$ , unless otherwise noted)

<i>Thinking of the VBP System, in your opinion, the amount of time you spend on...</i>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>			
	I spend no time on this task	Not enough time	Appropriate amount of time	Too much time
Training is: ( $n = 44$ )	4 (9)	8 (18)	31 (71)	1 (2)
Selecting KPIs is:	1 (2)	3 (7)	39 (87)	2 (4)
Data Collection is:	6 (13)	4 (9)	30 (67)	5 (11)
Data Entering and Cleaning is: ( $n = 44$ )	12 (27)	1 (2)	26 (59)	5 (11)
Data Submission is:	11 (24)	1 (2)	32 (71)	1 (2)
Communicating with the CMHF is:	2 (4)	0 (0)	43 (96)	0 (0)

Continuing our series of questions about specific tasks associated with the VBP system implementation, Table 6 displays responses as they relate to task complexity. The origin of this question lies in the qualitative interviews conducted prior to survey construction. In these meetings, interviewees described the program or associated tasks as “complex”, “overwhelming”, and in need of simplification. Of those who participate in tasks, survey respondents (consistent with qualitative interviews) found tasks to be somewhat complex. It is important to note Table 6 contains activities that grantees must undertake as part of gathering and reporting the data for the CMHF—which may be different than how grantees collect data internally.

**Table 6.** VBP Complexity Statements ( $n = 43$ , unless noted otherwise)

<i>Currently...when considering the current data collection, data entering, and data upload processes for your agency, in your opinion, please rate the complexity of...</i>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>			
	<b>Very Complex</b>	<b>Somewhat Complex</b>	<b>Not Complex at All</b>	<b>I do not participate in this task</b>
Pulling/gathering data metrics across systems.	1 (2)	23 (54)	4 (9)	15 (35)
Learning how to use the Excel data collection tool (e.g., your agency’s VBP Workbook).	5 (12)	12 (28)	14 (33)	12 (28)
Assembling and preparing data metrics for goals and KPIs in Excel VBP Workbook.	3 (7)	17 (40)	11 (26)	12 (28)
Knowing where to correctly enter the data within the Excel VBP Workbook.	4 (9)	7 (16)	16 (37)	16 (37)
Exporting/uploading the document to SharePoint for the CMHF. ( $n = 42$ )	4 (10)	4 (10)	15 (36)	19 (45)

Table 7, below, displays a series of future-oriented questions and responses. In this area, respondents report that they may have difficulty training employees in the future, but that the VBP initiative generated information is useful for them in multiple areas and will influence general, day-to-day practices in their agency over time.

**Table 7.** Needs for the Future (*Looking forward...*)

<i>...Does your agency have the capacity to train future staff on the VBP system? (n = 43)</i>	
<b>Answer Options:</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Yes	18 (42)
Some	13 (30)
No	2 (5)
Unsure	10 (23)
<i>...Can your agency adapt information from the VBP system for other agency needs (such as reporting to other funders or grant writing)? (n = 41)</i>	
Yes	39 (95)
No	2 (5)
<i>[FILTERED*]...Are any of your agency's goals, KPIs, or VBP system results used to report to other funders? (n = 37)</i>	
Yes	28 (76)
No	9 (24)
<i>...Do you think your everyday work will be influenced by the results of your agency's chosen KPIs? (n = 43)</i>	
Yes	34 (79)
No	2 (5)
Unsure	7 (16)

*Notes.* \* = Indicates that the respective question was only available to select survey participants based upon answer selection to previous questions.

Tables 8 and 9, below, contain the results of survey questions centered on the general user experience related to their agency's VBP system implementation and solicit reflective thoughts about the utility of the VBP initiative. The overall impression that these writers are left with after viewing results is that grantees are quite satisfied. Around 83% of respondents reported overall satisfaction with the initiative—which is a strong indicator of success. As with the adoption of any new initiatives, there are aspects that can be improved upon. Specifically, the learnability of the required system could be improved upon (i.e., ease of learning, ease of teaching, ease of understanding). Further, consistent with information gathered qualitatively, the grantees would like to be able to change their goals and KPIs.

**Table 8.** General Experience Questions ( $n = 41$ )

<i>Thinking generally of the Value-Based Payment (VBP) System, rate your agreement with the following statements:</i>	Frequency (%)					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unsure/Not Applicable
The VBP System is easy to learn.	1 (2)	18 (44)	8 (20)	8 (20)	3 (7)	3 (7)
The VBP System is easy to teach others.	2 (5)	11 (27)	14 (34)	8 (20)	1 (2)	5 (12)
The features and components of the VBP system are easy to comprehend.	2 (5)	20 (49)	9 (22)	6 (15)	1 (2)	3 (7)
Knowledge about the VBP system and associated skills are easy to retain.	5 (12)	18 (44)	9 (22)	5 (12)	1 (2)	3 (7)
I am comfortable doing VBP work without assistance.	3 (7)	20 (49)	6 (15)	7 (17)	0 (0)	5 (12)
The VBP system allows my agency to accomplish desired goals.	7 (17)	20 (49)	8 (20)	1 (2)	0 (0)	5 (12)
The VBP system is practical for my agency.	8 (20)	24 (59)	8 (20)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (2)
Overall, my agency has the necessary resources to collect and report goals and KPIs.	9 (22)	24 (59)	3 (7)	4 (10)	0 (0)	1 (2)
My agency has the data systems and software needed to collect the data metrics.	10 (24)	19 (46)	6 (15)	5 (12)	0 (0)	1 (2)
The data collection procedures for the VBP system are easy to understand.	5 (12)	18 (44)	10 (24)	4 (10)	0 (0)	4 (10)
Within my agency, the data collection procedures are efficient (e.g., tracking data and gathering data).	6 (15)	14 (34)	11 (27)	9 (22)	0 (0)	1 (2)
Using the Excel Workbook to report and complete my agency's goals and KPIs is clear.	8 (20)	23 (56)	5 (12)	2 (5)	0 (0)	3 (7)
Overall, the data submission process to the CMHF is efficient.	4 (10)	22 (54)	7 (17)	1 (2)	0 (0)	7 (17)
The chosen KPIs accurately measure what my agency intends to measure.	6 (15)	24 (59)	8 (20)	2 (5)	0 (0)	1 (2)
The VBP system meets my agency's needs and expectations.	7 (17)	28 (68)	4 (10)	1 (2)	0 (0)	1 (2)
Overall, I am satisfied with the VBP system for my agency.	9 (22)	25 (61)	5 (12)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (5)

**Table 9.** General Overall Questions ( $n = 40$ , unless noted otherwise)

	Frequency (%)					
	Yes, absolutely	Yes, but needs adapting	Uncertain – needs more time	No, we do not have the capacity at this time	No, does not meet needs	Not Applicable
<i>Please select the response that best answers the following statements:</i>						
<i>Considering all aspects of the VBP system, in your professional opinion, do you believe that...</i>						
...the information gained from the VBP system is worth the effort required? ( $n = 39$ )	23 (60)	13 (33)	2 (5)	1 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
...the VBP system meets your agency's changing needs?	21 (53)	10 (25)	9 (23)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
...the VBP system is worth the <b>time</b> investment?	27 (68)	8 (20)	5 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
...the VBP system is worth the <b>financial</b> investment for your agency?	27 (68)	8 (20)	4 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (3)
...the VBP system is worth the <b>training</b> investment for your agency?	28 (70)	7 (18)	3 (8)	0 (0)	1 (3)	1 (3)
...the VBP system is worth the <b>staff</b> investment for your agency?	29 (73)	9 (23)	2 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
...the VBP system is worth the <b>data infrastructure</b> investment for your agency?	24 (60)	11 (28)	3 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (5)
...the VBP system is, overall, worth your agency's participation when considering staff efforts and payoff?	31 (78)	5 (13)	4 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
...the VBP system is, as a whole, worth the financial reward (e.g., performance payment)?	32 (80)	3 (8)	4 (10)	0 (0)	1 (3)	0 (0)

Tables 10 and 11 contain the emergent themes from two key areas of the open text contained in the survey. The first, in Table 10, asks respondents what could have been done differently that would have helped with the implementation of their agency's VBP system. The respondents indicated that they chose KPIs or goals that: they did not fully understand; were too aggressive, broad, and ambitious; or were too difficult to measure. As a solution to this, clearer examples of KPIs and goals provided at training onset, encouragement to pursue more basic measures, and the flexibility to change unsuitable KPIs and goals would have been helpful. Other themes that emerged centered on a lack of clarity surrounding guidelines, deadlines, timelines, expectations, goals, and follow-up of VBP.

Table 11 contains coded responses to the survey question: *“Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your professional user experience of the Value Based Payment System?”* Eighteen survey respondents provided a response to this solicitation. The most densely populated theme centered around grantee gratitude for the initiative. In multiple forms, the researchers heard grantees express appreciation for the CMHF's prioritization of agency goals and being allowed to develop their own measures. Further, we learned that support in the process has been invaluable, and grantee agencies welcome continued learning, growth and development.

While this report focused on the user experience of the VBP initiative, Tables 10 and 11 (as well as other aggregated information) lead us to believe the agencies believe that the balance between the time they put into the program and the operational and financial benefits of program participation are strongly positive. This is an excellent indicator of the potential for sustainability.



**Table 10.** Qualitative Themes and Findings from Open Text Question

*“In hindsight, what do you think could have been done differently that would have helped with the implementation of VBP at your agency?” (n = 30)*

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b># of Responses</b>	<b>Findings</b>
<b>Regret over measures chosen</b>	9	Many respondents felt they chose KPIs or goals that they didn’t understand fully, were too aggressive, broad, or ambitious, or were too difficult to measure. Clearer examples of KPIs and goals provided at training onset, encouragement to pursue more basic measures, and the flexibility to change unsuitable KPIs and goals would be appreciated.
<b>Lack of clarity, confusion, or lack of understanding</b>	7	Respondents expressed confusion over multiple aspects of the VBP process. Common points included a lack of clarity surrounding guidelines, deadlines, timelines, expectations, goals, and follow-up of VBP.
<b>Other lessons learned</b>	6	A common “lesson learned” from respondents is the desire to integrate additional personnel into the VBP process earlier – namely clinical directors, case managers, stakeholders, and specific program staff and leadership. Additionally, a number of respondents expressed a desire for CMHF to facilitate meetings between agencies similar in size or service area to exchange useful strategies and tips.
<b>No suggestions for improvement</b>	5	One-sixth of responses expressed that they found the existing VBP implementation process to meet their needs and do not have any suggestions for improvement.
<b>Difficulty with technical requirements</b>	2	Some respondents noted difficulties with establishing the technical infrastructure or data collection needed for VBP.
<b>Training process could be improved</b>	2	Some respondents expressed that they would prefer trainings to be in-person and closer together (in time) to better connect material from one training session to the next.

**Table 11.** Qualitative Themes and Findings from Open Text Question

*“Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your professional user experience of the Value Based Payment System?” (n = 18)*

<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b># of Responses</b>	<b>Findings</b>
<b>Gratitude, excitement, or appreciation for the VBP initiative</b>	7	Many respondents expressed gratitude and appreciation towards the CMHF for the VBP initiative for the prioritization of agency goals and the development of their own measures. Respondents are excited about the potential VBP offers them, grateful to the CMHF and staff for their support, and glad to be able to participate in this process.
<b>Confusion surrounding incentives</b>	3	Agencies expressed that the amount and timing of financial incentives for VBP are unclear, which can cause budgeting difficulties. Respondents believe their agencies would benefit from knowing a concrete minimum amount to expect or the range of compensation they are aiming for. Not knowing the amount of financial reward or the timeframe for payment receipt makes it difficult to plan and to know whether they are doing well.
<b>Lack of clarity or confusion</b>	3	Respondents feel that multiple aspects of the VBP system are confusing or unclear – examples include difficulties with rules and parameters, technical confusion surrounding data submission, or uncertainty about the overall utility of the system.
<b>Difficulty with established measures</b>	2	Respondents expressed a desire for flexibility to alter their KPIs and goals as the process continues and they gain new information and understanding.
<b>Value of the process</b>	2	Respondents noted that the process of thinking about and establishing goals and KPIs, working with other staff members, and learning the VBP system together has inherent value both within and outside of VBP. They found the process fosters greater understanding and collaboration within their agencies.