

Summary Points for DC Presentation

- 1) **These services have the same problem other internet services have; how to make money, how to create a revenue model that will not only support the service but allow it to flourish. It was the realization of this dynamic that created the dot com meltdown. Having said that, the web is not exactly a barren wasteland of porno sites. Despite the .com frenzy and meltdown the web remains the fastest growing media platform in our society.**
- 2) **In general, mental health services are over utilized and under funded. That tends to make it a sellers market which means that providers are not motivated to spend money to bring more people to their services. There are also significant forces wishing to limit access i.e.: insurance companies and tax supported government agencies. As most things in the behavioral health field, this overarching situation is reinforced by the stigma surrounding these services and those that use them.**
- 3) **Though the internet is a great way to link people with goods and services it is culturally normative for use of it to be free. People will need to create alternative means to generate revenues and/or that free use paradigm needs to shift in order for these services to become profitable.**
- 4) **Service Availability Locators require the cooperation and participation of providers which value their independence from state funders. The over utilized, under funded dynamic affects them too. Most have waiting lists and are not motivated to go the extra mile to make access easier. Psych hospitals have long used a system where the phone call to access a bed is used to screen patients. Use of a web-based system is perceived as a move away from that time honored system of informal screening. It is our sense that the same political pressure that keeps the behavioral health system expanding despite state revenue shortfalls and stigma will eventually create a dynamic, as it has in Maine, where the advantages of these systems in enhancing access along with the desire of macro systems administrators to gain greater control over their systems will chip away at the resistance to this technology.**
- 5) **Those who have had limited success have found a way to make the money come to them through other means than service location activities. Many sites sell products related to mental health services to either therapists or clients as a way of generating income.**
- 6) **The strength of the internet remains the same, it offers privacy to find out about things people are uncomfortable sharing with other people. That will always be a major strength of the internet**

- 7) **The internet continues to offer interactive access to huge amounts of information easily. For that reason, we see it's use continuing to grow from its fledgling state now. In the therapist locator domain there is already a shake out happening. As our presentation indicated many sites that were put up in the past ten years have already folded. No site seems truly well known by the general public leaving this niche still wide open to those who can find a way to hold on and gain that general public recognition.**