



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (MHSA) – “COUNTY PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS” FACT SHEET

County System Improvement Highlights

Despite other mental health funding cuts caused by the ongoing California budget crisis, California's counties are reporting system improvements as a result of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) including:¹

1. Expanding and enhancing programs in accordance with MHSA statutes
2. Increasing the number of clients served
3. Creating positive impact on the way they do business as a result of increased family, consumer and staff participation in planning
4. Successfully designing programs that serve diverse populations
5. Reducing disparities in access to services and expanding supportive housing for mentally ill populations

The most frequently cited outcome of the MHSA identified by the counties is the systems change from hierarchical clinical settings to a more inclusive community-based, less layered system that emphasizes principles of partnership and teamwork. While services may not have always reached the “whatever it takes” intensity envisioned by the MHSA, counties are expressing satisfaction with the quality of services they are providing in the face of constant fiscal fluctuations

County Examples of MHSA Improvements in 2009²

- **Colusa County** integrated primary care and mental health services and is working with external agencies, such as Adult Protective Services to seek referrals, along with

¹ California Mental Health Planning Council, Published Reports: Policy and System Development End-of-Year Summary 2008-2009, January 2010 Report by Policy and System Development Committee (PSDC)

² IBID

establishing a four-bedroom supportive housing program to help decrease Psychiatric Hospital Facility usage.

- **Kern County** cited changing the system outlook from disability to recovery and wellness, including more peer specialists on staff, and integrating co-occurring disorders into mental health services. Kern also created a Self Empowerment Team, Homeless Adult Team and Recovery and Wellness Centers. Kern reported an increase in services to 1,182 unduplicated clients.
- **Los Angeles County** is relying on its staff as systems change agents and reinforcing collaboration with community-based organizations to better integrate clients into the community. More fluidity between levels of care has meant more individuals can enter into a Full Service Partnership Program.
- **San Bernardino County's** recognition of consumers and family members as the true experts in the recovery process resulted in stronger collaboration with community partners to identify mental health needs and successfully transform its mental health delivery system. They expanded several of their programs and added an Early Wraparound, Children's Crisis Response Team, and One-Stop Centers for Transitional Youth, a Psychiatric Triage Diversion Team and older adult Mobile Outreach and Case Management Program.
- **San Benito County** shifted from a clinical, one-on-one counseling emphasis to community-based services by offering more group sessions at their Esperanza Center, an important community asset and meeting place. They also added a Transition Age Youth (TAY) Program and reported an increase of 632 individuals in their client base.