



INNOVATION PLAN APPROVAL SUMMARY

Sonoma County Innovation

Total Requested for Innovation: \$1,723,769

Staff Recommends: APPROVAL

Interdisciplinary Mobile Intervention Team

Sonoma County's Innovation program will test a new approach to increase the quality of services to people experiencing a behavioral health crisis by integrating consumers and their family members as core members of an interdisciplinary mobile crisis response team. While integrated mobile crisis response teams are not new to the public mental health system nationally and in California, Sonoma County's Innovation will contribute to learning by testing whether including consumers and family members in significantly expanded roles as members of mobile crisis teams will lead to improved outcomes for people in a behavioral health crisis. Other members of the response team will include licensed clinicians and alcohol/drug services counselors. The County plans to measure client-level, organization-level, and system-level outcomes. If successful, the County expects:

- A reduced number of violent incidents
- Increased referrals to appropriate mental health services
- Reduced involvement in the criminal justice system.

During a traumatic 12 months (2007-2008), four Sonoma County residents in severe mental distress were shot and killed by members of three law enforcement agencies (*Press Democrat*, March 22, 2008). Law enforcement personnel have also been injured when responding to crisis calls. The Sonoma County Mental Health Division participates in and supports several community strategies to improve outcomes related to the response to people experiencing a behavioral health crisis, including:

- Crisis Intervention Training for law enforcement personnel
- Recurring referral meetings between the mental health division and law enforcement to identify individuals who might be at risk of a mental health crisis and to develop a plan to provide prevention/early intervention services
- Information for families in the event they need to call law enforcement to respond to a family member who is experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

Community members pointed out that those strategies have not sufficiently reduced consumer involvement in the criminal justice system and have not adequately lowered the incidence of non-lethal and lethal injuries that have occurred during crisis

responses. If successful, Sonoma County's Innovation is likely to improve crisis response in the County and contribute to the development of integrated crisis response team models.

Solano and Los Angeles Counties are implementing Innovations in mobile response teams, though with different focus areas than Sonoma County's proposed program.

Duration of Innovation Program: Three years

Three-Pronged Integrated Community Health Model

The primary goal of the Three-pronged Integrated Community Health Model is to address unmanaged physical health conditions and improve health outcomes of consumers living with serious and persistent mental illness. The importance of this Innovation is underscored by recent studies that demonstrate that people living with serious and persistent mental illness die 25 years earlier than the general population, due primarily to unmanaged and untreated physical health conditions. Providing access to medical care for such health conditions is critical to addressing this health disparity.

To improve care at the interface of physical health, mental health, and substance use, the Sonoma County Mental Health Division currently allocates MHPA Community Services and Supports (CSS) funds to increase the capacity of federally qualified health centers (FQHC) throughout the County to deliver mental health services to adults living with serious mental illness who are homeless and/or have co-occurring disorders. Despite some preliminary success, in-depth discussions with care providers, case managers, consumers, and family members revealed that a significant proportion of consumers with serious and persistent mental illness actively decline behavioral health treatment in primary care settings. Feedback indicated that consumers sometimes:

- Feel they are not welcome in a health clinic setting
- Have been unable to build sufficient trust with FQHC providers
- Experience difficulties navigating the primary care system.

Discussions also suggested that consumers could benefit from a stronger connection to other consumers and to mental health staff and practitioners.

Sonoma County's Three-Pronged Integrated Community Health Model features an integrated, multi-disciplinary team of peers, physicians including psychiatrists, nurses, behavioral health clinicians, and care managers. Peers with lived experience of mental health issues will play crucial roles, including:

- Help design the program
- Collaborate with clients to create individual care plans
- Develop and deliver a community health education curriculum.

The Innovation contributes to learning primarily by expanding the roles of people with lived experience of mental illness in the design and delivery of integrated behavioral and physical health care. Sonoma County will assess improved outcomes for consumers with serious and persistent mental illness, and will identify the specific elements of the model that most contribute to improved outcomes.

Several other counties, including Los Angeles, San Diego, and Madera (on today's MHSOAC agenda), have proposed to test Innovations related to various dimensions of the interface of primary, behavioral health, and substance-use treatment.

Duration of Innovation Program: Three years

Reducing Disparities Community Fund Initiative

Sonoma County's Reducing Disparities Community Fund Initiative is a hybrid model, blending features of community foundation donor-directed funds and venture capital funds that use flexible funding strategies and incubate new ideas to seed start-ups. The Innovation will test whether a community-driven funding initiative, implemented within the Mental Health Division, is an effective and sustainable way to increase access to underserved groups. The County will test whether this funding approach:

- Promotes the influence over funding decisions of community leaders, community members, consumers, and their families
- Brings new grass-roots community providers into the mental health system
- Streamlines grant-making
- Increases access to mental health services for underserved groups, especially for individuals living with serious and persistent mental illness, communities of color, and people in geographically isolated areas of the County
- Improves community satisfaction with mental health prevention and treatment.

The County will establish a volunteer Reducing Disparities Community Initiatives Fund Board, whose members will reflect underserved racial and ethnic communities, mental health consumers, and their families. The Board will:

- Further develop the funding model and communication strategy
- Make funding decisions
- Contribute to technical assistance for grantees.

The County will require that all funded projects be consistent with the Innovation Guidelines. Individual projects will receive technical assistance that will focus in part on sustaining projects after the Innovation funding period.

Historically in Sonoma County's Mental Health Division, as in most public systems, community members had limited involvement in funding strategies beyond a community assessment to identify gaps and prioritize needs. MHSA community planning served as a catalyst to begin to make the funding process more transparent and inclusive, engaging a diverse cross-section of community members to provide input throughout the stages of MHSA planning and shape funding strategies. However, the collaborative process stopped at the final stages of funding and funds disbursement, specifically, RFP development and contractor selection. Community feedback challenged Sonoma County MHD to take the next step and consider an approach to funding that is driven by the community throughout the process.

Depending on results of the Innovation, Sonoma County Mental Health Division might incorporate the funding approach into future initiatives, and a subset of funded projects might continue to receive funding from the County's Mental Health Division.

Alameda and San Francisco Counties are testing similar Innovations in community grant-making. Sonoma County plans to collaborate with these counties by sharing findings about successes and challenges.

Duration of Innovation Program: Three years