



Mental Health Services
Oversight and Accountability Commission

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Nearly \$2.5 Million in Prop 63 Funds Approved for Contra Costa, Humboldt, and Sierra Counties for Mental Health Services

Today, the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) approved a total of \$2,444,895 for mental health services in Contra Costa, Humboldt, and Sierra counties. \$1,454,228 in Innovation (INN) mental health program funds was approved for Contra Costa County and \$818,700 was approved for Humboldt County. \$171,967 was approved for Sierra County for Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs.

The California MHSOAC is a 16-member commission charged with the oversight of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The MHSA was approved by California voters in 2004 as Proposition 63 to provide for expanded mental health services in California.

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funds are approved for programs that apply strategies focused on preventing mental illness from becoming severe and disabling. MHSOAC Chair Andrew Poat said, "Our prevention programs will decrease expensive emergency room visits as we provide prevention services to consumers of mental health services. Prevention and Early Intervention funds will keep kids in school, keep families together, and will avoid long term unemployment."

The funds approved by the MHSOAC for Innovation (INN) purposes will help fund county mental health programs that are novel, creative, and ingenious in their mental health approaches. These programs are also developed within communities in ways that are inclusive and representative. Chair Poat said, "Innovation funds will help to jump start our thinking about how to improve our mental health programs."

Contra Costa County will be using their Innovation (INN) funds for their Social Supports for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Queer, Questioning, Intersex, 2-Spirit (LGBTQQI2-S) Youth Program. The hope is that this program will create a social-ecological model that will help prevent and intervene against feelings of isolation and poor mental health outcomes among this population of youth.

Humboldt County plans on using their INN funds for a peer-based approach to improving mental health outcomes for older transition-age youth with severe mental illness, especially those who have experienced foster care. This project will pair each client with a Peer Support Specialist who will provide a range of services and supports while playing an active role in Humboldt's Department of Health and Human Services youth driven and youth-focused initiatives.

Sierra County will use their PEI funds for a Student Assistance Program. This program is based on Evidence-Based Practices and is designed to enhance mental health and positive behavior, improve academic success and reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs among at risk youth. In this project, a professional behavioral health counselor will split their time between school-based screening, small support groups and individual counseling and wilderness activities. The hope is that the Student Assistance Program will create a network of support for students and their families.

"Prevention and Early Intervention programs will transform the mental health system. We will stop requiring consumers to "fail first" before receiving services and we will move to a "help first" system. Prevention and Early Intervention programs are a new approach to mental health in California. This program is a win for both mental health consumers and taxpayers," said Poat.

The MHSOAC met on Thursday, April 29, 2010 at the California Institute for Mental Health in Sacramento, CA.

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