

# Issue Resolution



Recommendations:  
MHISOAC Client and Family  
Leadership Committee

# Issue Resolution

## Background

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- ❑ MHSA Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5845(d) (7) provides that the MHSOAC may refer critical issues related to performance of a county mental health program to the Department of Mental Health (DMH).
- ❑ MHSOAC and California Mental Health Planning Council (CMHPC) make referrals to DMH in response to issues related to the MHSA; DMH responds using an interim process.

# Issue Resolution

## Background

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- A workgroup met for ten months to advise DMH on the development of a procedure to respond to MHSA-related issues.
- DMH intends to postpone development of a permanent statewide issue resolution process until work is advanced on local issue resolution approaches.

# Issue Resolution

## Background

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- ❑ Most issues and responses related to the MHSA occur at the local level.
- ❑ Counties differ in how they respond.
- ❑ The effectiveness of current approaches to issue resolution is unclear.
- ❑ CMHDA's Social Justice Committee is developing recommendations for local issue resolution.

# Issue Resolution

## Motions

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- MHSOAC will convene a work group, consisting of designated co-chairs and representatives of the CFLC, Services Committee, and Cultural and Linguistic Competency Committee, to develop recommendations regarding statewide Issue Resolution Processes, using CFLC's recommendations as a discussion starting point. The Work Group will report its recommendations to the MHSOAC in October, 2009.

# Issue Resolution

## Motions

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- MHSOAC asks the Department of Mental Health to provide the MHSOAC, through its CFLC, a quarterly summary of submitted MHSA issues and their resolution. The CFLC will analyze this report and report on its results to the MHSOAC at least biannually.

# Issue Resolution

## CFLC Initial Points for Discussion

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- ❑ Any statewide issue resolution requirement that MHSA issues be addressed first at the local level requires a local issue resolution process that meets specified standards.
- ❑ A specific office, individual, or entity within DMH or other State organization needs to be designated to provide issue resolution.
- ❑ Clear standards should be established for how counties are accountable to respond to stakeholder suggestions in community planning.

# Issue Resolution

## CFLC Initial Points for Discussion

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- ❑ Issue resolution must ensure anonymity and protection from reprisals, including, enforceable anti-retaliation (whistle-blower) provisions.
- ❑ Accessible communication should clarify for community members how to raise an issue and get a response.
- ❑ People raising an issue need assurance that they will receive a timely response; the time limit should be specified.

# Issue Resolution

## CFLC Initial Points for Discussion

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- ❑ Issues at State and local levels should be resolved by a panel that includes clients and family members/parents who are paid for their services and who have authority to provide resolution.
- ❑ Issue resolution processes should include minimum standards with consequences that include a definition of "resolution."
- ❑ Once an issue resolution process is completed, it is essential to get back to the person so he or she knows what action has been taken.

# Issue Resolution

## CFLC Initial Points for Discussion

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- Technical assistance to clients and family members to assist them with issue resolution should be available.
- An 800 number for people who want to raise issues should be available.
- Clients and families receiving services with multiple, blended, overlapping or evolving funding sources need an understandable, streamlined way to raise and resolve issues.

# Issue Resolution

## CFLC Initial Points for Discussion

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- Consideration should be given to distinct review processes for concerns about services and system issues (planning, plans, funding, etc.).
- There need to be mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of issue resolution; evaluation should emphasize the perceptions of clients and family members.
- An effective issue resolution process requires independence from mental health departments.

# Issue Resolution

## CFLC Initial Points for Discussion

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- The county should inform the public about kinds of grievances filed, numbers resolved within required timeframes, specific resolutions and outcomes, and any resulting policy or practice changes.
- Clearly established roles and authority for all local review bodies should ensure that clients' and families' concerns are treated as legitimate in an atmosphere that prevents reprisals.
- More differentiation between the roles of MHSOAC and CMHPC is needed.

# Issue Resolution

## CFLC Initial Points for Discussion

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- Consideration should be given to establishing Issue Resolution Boards with representation from several counties.
- Local issue resolution should be consistent from county to county, to the extent possible.
- There need to be strategies to address situations when the root of the problem is political.
- Clients and family members who have problems at the local level should be connected with advocates and peer support.