

MHSOAC

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

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September 9, 2010

Diane Nunn, Director
Administrative Office of the Courts
Center for Families, Children & the Courts
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3688

Dear Ms. Nunn:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the draft recommendations made by the Task Force for Criminal Justice Collaboration on Mental Health Issues.

Many of the recommendations made by the Task Force are consistent with the values of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) as well as with the values of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC). I have provided feedback for the purpose of clarification to several of the Task Force recommendations, listed below:

Recommendation #15:

Courts and Department of Mental Health should ensure that courts have adequate representation as part of the local Mental Health Services Act stakeholder teams in order to promote greater collaboration between the courts and local mental health agencies and to support services for people with mental illness involved in the criminal justice system.

Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5848(a) states that "each plan and update shall be developed with local stakeholders, including adults and seniors with severe mental illness, providers of services, law enforcement agencies, education, social services agencies and other important interests." The Courts and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) cannot require counties to collaborate with the courts. The Courts are encouraged to become involved in local stakeholder processes in order to promote greater collaboration.

Recommendation # 86:

Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding dedicated to housing should be leveraged with other funding sources to ensure equal access to housing for offenders with mental illness, including those on probation. The state Director of

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Mental Health and the MHSOAC should ensure that county plans include provisions to secure equal access to housing paid for with MHSA funding for offenders with mental illness.

The MHSA states that a local stakeholder process determines the plan for use of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding, as stated in the previous response to Recommendation #15. DMH and MHSOAC cannot require county plans to include provisions for equal access to MHSA housing for offenders with mental illness. Decisions on the use of funds are determined through the local stakeholder process. The Courts are encouraged to become involved in each county's local stakeholder process.

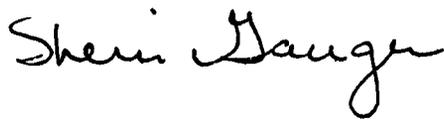
Recommendation #123:

MHSA funding should be actively utilized for state and local educational campaigns and training programs for the general public that reduce stigma and discrimination toward those with mental illness. Educational campaigns and training programs should incorporate the recommendations of the California Strategic Plan on Reducing Mental Health Stigma and Discrimination.

Recommendation #123 is consistent with the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Statewide guidelines which were issued for implementation in March of 2010. The MHSOAC approved the use of \$60 million of PEI funds to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan on Reducing Mental Health Stigma and Discrimination, which was the result of a three year stakeholder process. I am attaching a copy of the Strategic Plan. It can also be accessed at the following website: <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/PEIStatewideProjects/StrategicPlan.asp>.

Thank you for producing this report. We look forward to the final version and hope to work collaboratively with you in the future. If you have any questions, please contact Ann Collentine, Mental Health Program Supervisor, at ann.collentine@dmh.ca.gov or (916) 445-8726.

Sincerely,



SHERRI L. GAUGER

Executive Director

Enclosure

cc: Karen Moen, Sr. Court Services Analyst, Administrative
Office of the Courts
Curtis Hill, Commissioner, MHSOAC
David Pating, MD, Commissioner, MHSOAC
Larry Poaster, PhD, Commissioner, MHSOAC