

Stanislaus County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services
A Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Service Organization

MHSA NEWSLETTER

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JULY CONTENTS:

- Featured MHSA Program: HMHT
- Uninvited Visitors (SATT/SART)
- MHSA in Stanislaus County: Workforce Education & Training Component
- Performance Measurement Update

...a newsletter to share information about Stanislaus County's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) programs with staff, consumers, stakeholders, other county departments and the community at large.

Health Mental Health Team

By Phil Hoile, Ph.D., Coordinator, Health Mental Health Team

Most people know it's important to exercise and eat a balanced diet in order to maintain optimal health. We know if we go for a walk several times a week and lay off sugar and fried foods most of us can lead a fairly healthy life. On the other hand, what about those of us for whom improper diets and a lack of exercise can be life threatening? How are such individuals affected when the doctor tells them they will have to take medication several times a day, every day, for the rest of their lives? They are told if they don't take their medication as prescribed and don't change their lifestyle they eventually may lose a limb or go blind because of diabetes, or may have a stroke because of hypertension. Furthermore, what if someone who just heard this news doesn't speak English, doesn't have any insurance, has substance abuse issues, and is a person of color who hasn't felt comfortable coming to traditional treatment centers in the first place. To complicate matters further, what if this person also has had to cope with major depression, panic disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia throughout their life and is at risk of incarceration, hospitalization, or homelessness? Well, this is exactly where the Health Mental Health Team comes in.

The purpose of the Health Mental Health Team is to help the people I just mentioned. By providing case management, counseling, psycho-educational groups, transportation to important appointments, psychiatry services, and 24/7 crisis availability our program helps individuals stay out of the hospital, off the street, and out of jail. We are a multi-disciplinary team composed of a full time psychiatric nurse, licensed MFT, and clinical services technician, along with two full time behavioral health specialists, a clinical psychologist/program coordinator, a 30% time psychiatrist, and a full time administrative assistant. We provide services in both English and Spanish. As an MHSA funded full service partnership program the Health Mental Health Team uses the "whatever it takes" approach to provide services to a maximum of 50 consumers at any given time. Overall goals of the program include reducing health and mental health related hospitalizations for our clients, as well as reducing homelessness and incarcerations. We work with our consumers' families and also make efforts to increase our consumers' community involvement. Although our focus is helping people who are underserved and uninsured, our team also provides services to individuals with Medi-Cal insurance.

Many people believe diabetes and hypertension aren't really very dangerous because they are so common, but that isn't true at all. Both diabetes and hypertension can be life threatening diseases made even more dangerous when individuals coping with such illnesses have psychological difficulties interfering with their ability to follow through on required treatment regimens. What complicates treatment further for our consumers is that many of the medications used to manage mental health disorders can make diabetic and hypertensive conditions even worse. Consequently, for the Health Mental Health Team staff members, and even more importantly for our consumers, the ongoing communication we maintain with our clients' primary care providers is vital.

In just our first year of service several Health Mental Health Team clients who were previously unaware of their own powers of recovery have gone from being homeless, frequently hospitalized consumers at risk of significant medical complications because of chronic high blood sugar levels to medically stable, psychologically blossoming individuals participating more fully in life and the work force. It's exciting to see what can happen when people are given the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

For those of you wishing to contact us, the Health Mental Health Team is located on the Stanislaus Recovery Center campus. Our mailing address is 1904 Richland Avenue, Ceres, 95307. Our phone number is (209) 541-2914.

The MHSA-CSS (Communicate, Share and Support) Meeting is held the 4th Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the Redwood Room, 800 Scenic Drive.

Uninvited Visitors

By Demi Laughlin, RN-BC, Manager, SATT/SART

It was a brilliant April morning. The breeze was cool, the skies blue, and the sun bright. Dena Wilson sat at the reception desk in the Senior Access Teams offices.

Wanting to feel the breeze, Dena propped open the front door and returned to her desk. Within the hour a group of twelve tiny uninvited visitors flooded into the waiting room. The noise and excitement of their entry brought Demi Laughlin, Karen Snyder, and Melanie Love to the reception area. Expecting to find a client having difficulty, they were delighted to find a mother duck and her 11 tiny ducklings. The mother duck quickly found the front door and escaped, but the ducklings fled in the opposite direction, down the hallway, hid behind desks and scattered everywhere.

After several minutes of stalking, all eleven ducklings were captured and put into a small shredding box. Then the challenge hit. How to reunite the mother duck that had left the scene, with her babies?

After a couple of phone calls and much deliberation, the box of ducklings was placed carefully outside the front door, the door closed. The ducklings cheeped loudly.

Within minutes the mother duck flew to the roof of the facility. Dena stealthily reached through the door and tipped over the box of ducklings, quickly closing the door. The babies began to scurry about. The mother landed. Once they saw their mother, they quickly fell into a line and followed her. The mother duck jumped into the street and one of the babies followed her, jumping into the street too.

The traffic was nonstop. The mother duck jumped back on the sidewalk but the duckling couldn't make it. The staff was pinned to the window as the baby was in the gutter, out of sight.

The tiny duckling finally made a big leap and managed to make it back up on the sidewalk. He quickly fell in line with his siblings. Off they scurried, following their mother. They were out of sight, headed toward the street with the speeding traffic. We waited for the squeal of brakes. It didn't happen. The ducks had made it safely across.

It was a great way to start the day, and a reminder of just how fragile life is and how quickly and easily our lives are affected by others.

If you have questions or suggestions regarding MHSA, please forward them by I.D. mail or email to:

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NEW! Workforce Education and Training Component of MHSA

By Karen Hurley, MHSA Coordinator

The new Workforce Education and Training component of MHSA is designed to develop a three-year plan that will integrate into the existing three-year Community Services and Supports (CSS) Plan. This is an important ingredient in the transformation of public mental health system and includes funding for actions such as: mental health career pathway programs, training and technical assistance, financial incentive programs, residency and internship programs and, of course, workforce staffing support (new positions to support planning and implementation). Local and statewide projects will be developed in each funding category. Local emphasis is driven by stakeholder process and input. Stakeholders include consumers and family members, staff at all levels from the county and entities contracting with the county, those who can speak to workforce diversity needs, educational, training and consultant entities, professional organizations, and relevant community partners.

The Workforce Education and Training Component of MHSA is intended to address a number of statewide workforce challenges, which include:

Cultural competency, language proficiency, and diversity of workforce; hiring consumers and family members; organizational capacity to support new services; geographical challenges of recruiting staff and reaching consumers; recruiting and retaining licensed staff

Funding for early planning and implementation is available and Stanislaus County has already requested and received approval for these funds. The state requires that a person be identified in each county to have key responsibility for planning and early implementation. The first phase of plan development will be an extensive workforce needs assessment. In this assessment, counties are to count the entire workforce that provides and supports services, including contract agencies and volunteers. Final plan instructions and requirements will be posted by DMH this month and after that the fun begins!

Want to know more? Go to: <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/mhsa/EducTrain.asp>



NEW!! State Issues Mandatory Revisions for MHSA FSP Data Collection Forms

The California State Department of Mental Health has made some slight revisions to the MHSA FSP Data Collection Forms, to include the PAF, KET and QTR forms. Performance Measurement will be incorporating these changes into our local Teleforms and distribute to programs within the next few weeks. The overall content and format of the Teleforms have not changed. There have been some slight changes to the options available in the Education, Financial, Residential and Administrative sections. Please continue to use the current version of each Teleform until the revised versions have been distributed. If you have any questions, feel free to contact PM staff.