

Update

mhsoac
newsletter

December 2008

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Welcome to our first Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) newsletter directed to our public stakeholders and the California mental health community at-large. We are very pleased to present you with information about the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and the MHSOAC.

In this issue, we have articles about state efforts on behalf of veterans' mental health, the MHSA Housing Program, recent Remembrance Day activities, and the Prevention and Early Intervention Program (PEI), including facts and figures to inform you on the current status of PEI. You can also find stories about MHSA-sponsored programs in the Mental Health Success Stories section. We also welcome our two new commissioners, Richard Bray and Howard Kahn, with a question and answer section in the MHSOAC Bulletin Board. Lastly, we honor Saul Feldman who completed his term on the Commission in November. With Chair Linford Gayle finishing up his term this month, Andrew Poat will become Commission Chair and Larry Poaster will become Vice-Chair for the upcoming year.

Please let us know what you think of our newsletter and please submit information of your own for consideration for future issues.

Until next time,

Sheri Whitt
Executive Director

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Paving The Way for Veterans

By Matt Lieberman



Yee Xiong/MHSOAC

With the ongoing conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, the mental health of California veterans is a priority for state government this year. The Department of Veterans Affairs has secured two new staff positions to start developing a statewide network for mental health referrals for veterans and Governor Schwarzenegger has signed bills that will assist veterans with mental health needs.

The two new positions in the Department of Veterans Affairs will

provide assistance to County Veterans Service Officers to help development of community networks resulting in referrals of veterans to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This referral process is intended to assist our veterans who have a high incidence of post traumatic stress disorder.

In addition to this budget action, Governor Schwarzenegger has signed several bills to assist veterans with their mental health. Chapter 593 (SB 1401) by Senator Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto) requires the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Military Department to develop

plans for outreach to veterans returning to California from combat. The outreach is for assisting the veterans in obtaining screening for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). The Veterans Administration (VA) will provide the screening for PTSD and TBI. In addition, the VA is screening veterans for exposure to depleted uranium.

Chapter 591 (AB 3083) by the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs, requires the Department of Health Care Services, working with Department of Mental Health (DMH), to seek all available federal funding for mental health services for veterans.

When the budget actions and the new legislation are considered together, state government is clearly thinking about the needs of veterans' mental health this year.

Federal Bailout Bill Provides for Parity for Mental Health Benefits

After twelve years of advocacy, the federal parity bill for mental health coverage was passed by Congress and signed by President Bush as part of the recent economic rescue bill.

Mental health parity, the requirement of equal insurance coverage for mental and physical illness, has long been a goal of Senators Pete Domenici and the late Paul Wellstone. Senator Domenici has a daughter living with schizophrenia. Senator Wellstone, who died in a

2002 plane crash, had a brother with a severe mental illness. Representatives Patrick Kennedy and Jim Ramstad were the leaders for this cause in the House of Representatives.

More details about the dramatic change in parity policy can be found in an October 5, 2008 article in the New York Times by Robert Pear titled, "Bailout Provides More Mental Health Coverage."



Staff welcomes news of your professional endeavors, papers, and other content ideas for consideration in future issues.

Submit them to:

Email: mhsoc@dmh.ca.gov

Fax: 916-445-4927

Attn: **Communications**

“Cool Beans”—A MHSA Success in Yolo County



Courtesy of Turning Point / Assembly Member Mariko Yamada & Turning Point staff

By Matt Lieberman

“We give people a reason to get up, not to give up!”. These are the encouraging words of John Buck, the CEO of Turning Point Community Programs and job training sponsor of the new coffee cart business in Yolo County called, “Cool Beans! coffee + eats”. “Cool Beans” is providing training and employment for adults with disabilities in Yolo County.

“Cool Beans” is an MHSA funded start-up program, administered by Turning Point. Turning Point has been serving mental health clients in the Sacramento region for many

years with housing, employment, and other supportive services.

The “Cool Beans” Coffee Cart offers coffee, healthy drinks, snacks and sandwiches for sale in the Herbert Bauer M.D. Health and Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Building in Woodland, California. “Cool Beans” also has a catering business for sandwiches, coffee and beverages.

“We’re thrilled to open this new training program, because everyone benefits,” said Turning Point CEO John Buck. Buck said this program currently has

one trainer, one full time consumer employee, and two trainees. He hopes to have six to seven other trainees participate in this job training program during the coming year.

Buck is pleased to note the full time consumer employee at “Cool Beans” is receiving health and other benefits from his employment. Other benefits to employees and trainees include increased socialization and reduced isolation. Trainees learn job skills that are applicable in many employment circumstances. These job skills are often the result of dramatic increases in confidence that allow for good customer service. Future jobs for trainees might include positions in retail sales.

“Cool Beans” is looking forward to selling hot drinks throughout the winter. They are also trying to branch out into catering meetings with coffee, sandwiches, and snacks.

Response to customer surveys have been very encouraging. As part of its marketing campaign, the coffee cart has been hanging door hangers in the neighborhood, inviting people inside to try some delicious drinks.

Turning Point has other consumer employment programs, including landscaping work in Yolo County and landscaping and janitorial work in Stanislaus County. John Buck said, “We give people a meaningful place in life, something to do, and a little money, too.”

Remembrance Day

By Matt Lieberman

September 15, 2008 was the Sixth Annual Remembrance Day in California. This day is dedicated to the memories of those individuals who

lived and died in California mental institutions and developmental centers without proper recognition. Over 45,000 Californians have died without respectful burial since 1852.

In September, a memorial for Remembrance Day was held at a Sacramento chapel. The ceremony was sponsored by several mental health advocacy groups, including The California Network

of Mental Health Clients, Protection and Advocacy, Inc., and People First of California. These groups are sponsors of the California Memorial Project (CMP).

CMP has the mission to “honor and restore dignity” to those who lived and died in state institutions. CMP has three main goals as expressed in Remembrance Day publications:

Continued on Page 4

“Network of Care”- An MHSA Information Sharing Success

By Matt Lieberman

Is it possible to bring corporate technology into social services? In fact, it is—and that is just what former Assembly member Bruce Bronzan has done with an early Mental Health Services Act investment in his Trilogy Company’s “Network of Care.”

“Network of Care” is a public website based on a model of a virtual private network. Bronzan looked at companies, such as DuPont Corporation, which used such networks in the late 1990’s.

In a recent presentation before the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC), Bronzan described his application of private networks to public problems in this way. “We have a fragmented Health and Human Services in the United States because we

have no national health care,” said Bronzan. “We have programs that are not connected,” he said. Speaking figuratively, Bronzan said, “We have 100 different funding streams going to Sacramento for aging and these go to 1000 different agencies.”

Bronzan wondered how to coordinate these funding streams and he came up with “The Network of Care”. The “Network of Care” has an extensive library as part of its service—all for free because it is a public service. The “State” choice on the site has all the bills in the California Legislature. Also included in the site are 50,000 publicly funded links. Lastly, visitors to the “Network of Care” can establish a Personal Health Record, or PHR, with a willing provider. Providers can deposit medical information in the PHR.

This website was first piloted in San Diego County. Bronzan showed the network to the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. Not much later, Bronzan asked State Mental Health Director Stephen Mayberg to get involved and Mayberg decided to ask the MHSOAC to invest MHSA funds.

The MHSOAC approved this investment. “The Network of Care” now has two million users a year—not just hits, but users. Bronzan said, “This has been an enormous success.”

The “Network of Care” can be accessed at www.networkofcare.com

Remembrance Day

Continued from Page 3

1. “Restore all cemeteries or graves where individuals from state institutions are buried.”
2. “Document the history of the client and consumer movement in California.”
3. “Preserve the history of individuals that lived in state institutions through collections of oral histories which tell the stories about living in an institution from a client’s perspective.”

Former State Senator and current MHSOAC Commissioner Wes Chesbro joined the mental health community at the Sacramento

memorial. Commissioner Chesbro said, “I had a small part in bringing Remembrance Day to completion. All of the mental health advocates and the clients deserve all the credit.”

In fact, Commissioner Chesbro carried SB 1448, Chapter 440 of 2002, which required the state to reveal the names of individuals who lived in state mental institutions and developmental centers and were buried in unmarked graves. In his remarks, Commissioner Chesbro emphasized that treating disabled people with dignity is part of their “human rights.”

MHSOAC Chair Linford Gayle issued the following statement dedicated to Remembrance Day, “I appreciate all of the efforts by the California Memorial Project in reviewing records all over the state to get the information to give people back their names.” “People with disabilities always deserve our respect and shall retain their dignity.”

Other speakers participating in the memorial included:

Alan Fisher, President of East Lawn
 Rabbi Mona Alfi, Chaplain of the Senate
 Tina Wooton, Department of Mental Health
 Alicia Mendoza, Protection and Advocacy
 Frank Smith, Client Advocate
 Bill Waters, Office of Patient’s Rights
 Lou Williamson, Senior Advocate Volunteer, Mental Health Association
 Frances Gracechild, Executive Director, Resources for Independent Living
 Jenny Olson, Protection and Advocacy.

All of these speakers stressed the importance of treating those institutionalized with mental illness with honor and respect, both in life and at the end of their days. Remembrance Day is one way in which these goals can be achieved.

PEI PROGRESS REPORT

The table below lists the approved counties, dates of approval, and the amount of funding approved to date.

County	Date Approved	Amount Approved
Alameda	11/20/2008	\$4,891,876.00
Glenn	9/25/2008	\$155,300.00
Merced	11/20/2008	\$1,903,000.00
Modoc	9/25/2008	\$125,000.00
Mono	7/24/2008	\$125,000.00
Monterey	7/24/2008	\$3,357,700.00
San Bernardino	9/25/2008	\$14,239,611.00
Solano	9/25/2008	\$1,890,633.00
San Mateo	12/11/2008	\$2,071,177.00
Total Expenditures Approved:		\$26,688,120.00

Source:: MHSOAC

By Yee Xiong

The Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) is on a roll with Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Plan Review & Approval this year.

According to the CA Department of Mental Health, a total of **\$21.4 million** has been approved for **50** counties to conduct community planning and to develop PEI county plans to date.

As of December 2008, **13** counties have submitted PEI plans for approval and **9** of these counties have been approved for a total expenditure of more than **26 million dollars**.

Keep up with the latest updates on PEI Plan Review & Approval at:
http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSOAC/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention.asp

PEI Funds At Work For Alameda County's Latino Community

By Matt Lieberman and Gia Vang

Recently approved MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funds in Alameda County will benefit several ethnic communities.

One of those communities are the Latinos, who account for more than 312,000 of Alameda's population according to a 2000 report. This group was more than a quarter percent of the county's population that were living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. In the public mental health system, Latinos were served at one third of the rate of the general population.

Gary Spicer, Alameda MHSA coordinator, said Latinos are far more at-risk of not having access to mental health services compared to Caucasians.

"The huge issue to look at here is cultural competence," he said.

Latinos in Alameda County, and in many other counties, have difficult barriers to overcome in order to gain access to mental health services. These barriers include language differences and lack of information about emotional wellness. Barriers also include stigma, shame and discrimination associated with mental health symptoms. As a result of identifying all of these barriers, the community planning group in Alameda County has consistently identified Latinos as a PEI funding priority.

During a focus group last year,

members of Alameda's Latino community voiced concerns about a cultural disconnect and lack of education about mental illnesses, such as depression. These comments were anonymous, but helped the county see what cultural barriers they needed to address.

"We don't admit that we feel depressed due to 'machismo' in our community. We have it (depression) but we justify that we are just sad. We don't know what we are feeling, we are lacking education about depression," one person said, confidentially.

Now, MHSA funding for this group will fund interventions that include mental health consultation, cultural wellness practices, and outreach and education.

Wendi Wright, an Alameda MHSA planner, said the consultation portion of the plan encompasses linkage of primary care experts and education.

"We really want to build that bridge between these communities and the services that they need," Wright said.

Outreach activities directed to Latinos will include education workshops, "placticas" or discussion groups, and support groups on individual and family mental health and wellness topics. All of this work will be performed in community settings. In addition, home visits will be provided for individuals with geographical barriers. Educational activities

will be culturally based, using, for example, "dichos" or proverb teachings. This program will also develop a resource guide for the community.

Wright said they will craft messages that are specific to this community.

"We are going to use language that resonates with the community and make sure that there is an easy passage way to get them there," she said.

"Promotores", or community members with lived experience, will provide case management as a part of the mental health consultation services. Then, "Placticas", or focus groups, will help to identify community problems.

Other underserved communities who lacked access to mental health services, and were identified by the local community planning process, were Asian and Pacific Islanders, South Asians and Afghans, and Native Americans. These populations will also receive similar services tailored to their community needs.

MHPA-Funded San Francisco Housing Development Now Open

By Gia Vang

MHPA housing funds hit the San Francisco street corner at Polk and Geary streets, allowing tenants to move in November 10, 2008. The development, with a \$1 million contribution from the MHPA housing fund, will house 12 older adult homeless, low-income or disabled consumers, in its 10 units set aside for this population.

Margot Antonetty, San Francisco's deputy director of housing and urban health, said cooperation from the Department of Public Health, the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation and Citizen's Housing Corporation has made the Polk Senior Housing apartments a success.

"Seeing the clients actually use their own card keys to get in to the building is great," Antonetty said.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom said in a recent press conference that the city is the first county in California to get a housing development running with MHPA funding.

"To get money from an initiative that we supported is a big deal," Newsom said.

Currently, four housing applications

have been reviewed and approved.

These included Sacramento, San Francisco, Santa Clara and San Diego counties.

The MHPSOAC, DMH and the CalHFA have worked together and approved an estimated total of \$7.7 million in expenditures for MHPA housing.

Other counties have also turned in housing applications. There are 10 proposed plans that are still under review. Some of those awaiting approval come from counties such as Los Angeles, Sonoma, Monterey and Riverside. The total MHPA housing funds requested to date is about \$25.7 million.

Members of the MHPA housing review team are excited about the positive impact MHPA housing dollars will have on consumers.

Wanda Kato, a staff mental health specialist who reviews county housing plans, said, "The provision of housing for consumers is such an integral part in assisting them on their road to wellness and recovery."

In San Francisco, Scott Falcone, a Citizen's Housing Corporation project manager, has already seen the positive impacts of the Polk development in the community. He said the empty lot that the building now stands on was a nuisance for neighbors for years. When citizens talked to neighbors about the possibility of building a housing development, neighbors were hesitant because they didn't

know if it would make the area worse, but now have no complaints because they've seen the unique way in which services are being offered.

"It takes the building going up and people coming in and out and others seeing how it works to actually prove it," Falcone said.

But what's most important is the impact a place to live has had on the consumers, Kristy Lambert, a program coordinator for the development, said.

"The change is unbelievable for a lot of them because they have such a beautiful place to live in," she said.

Antonetty said although the funding from the housing fund went directly to construction of the MHPA units, the county has paid for units to be fully furnished with a bed, chair, refrigerator, pots and pans and toiletries.

San Francisco will turn in a second application for MHPA housing funds for the Fulton Housing Development Project. Plans for tenants, included mental health consumers, in 2011, she said.

The staff held a Thanksgiving dinner in November for tenants who already moved in to the Polk site. Staff plan to have all 110 units occupied by the end of the year. An official opening ceremony for the development is set for spring.



Gia Vang/ MHPSOAC: The Polk Senior Housing is located at 990 Polk Street, San Francisco.

Polk Senior Housing Services

- ◆ Access to one services coordinator, two case managers and a registered nurse for referrals
- ◆ A laundry room on the second floor
- ◆ A community room with a full kitchen
- ◆ Group meetings for issues such as substance abuse
- ◆ Public transportation that is easily accessible

The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission welcomed two new commissioners in September. Welcome Commissioner Richard Bray and Commissioner Richard Kahn!

MEET YOUR COMMISSIONERS

Richard Bray



Seat on Commission:

Superintendent of School District

Hometown:

Rancho Cucamonga, California

Current Position:

Superintendent of schools for the Tustin Unified School District

How does your experience inform your work on the Commission?

As the only school-based Commissioner, I believe I can help the Commission know the mental health needs of K-12 students and how the schools can effectively partner with the mental health providers. Early prevention and intervention is the key and I wholeheartedly support the goals and work of the Commission.

What would you like to see the MHSOAC focus on the future?

More school-based interventions and closer partnerships between schools, parents and mental health providers.

Howard Kahn



Seat on Commission:

Health Services Plan/ Insurer

Hometown:

Culver City, California

Current Position:

CEO, L.A. Care Health Plan

How does your experience inform your work on the Commission?

Leading a public health plan for the last seven years, I feel like I am just beginning to understand the complexities and challenges of the current mental health care system and its intersection with the physical health delivery system. I believe that we can do a lot better job of creating a clear roadmap for obtaining and coordinating services and care.

What would you like to see the MHSOAC focus on the future?

Better coordination of mental health services among primary doctors, specialists, schools, regional centers and health plans to improve early diagnosis and Intervention.

To read more on commissioners, please log on to our website at:

<http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSOAC/Member.asp>

MHSOAC Takes Home *Happiness*

By Yee Xiong



Yee Xiong / MHSOAC: MHSOAC Commissioners with Wellness & Recovery Center members.

"I'm sure we all have ideas of what happiness means to us..." program coordinator at the Wellness & Recovery Center in Sacramento, Eric Zuniga, said as he presented the Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission with the center's very first collaborative consumer art painting, *Happiness*, at November's Commission meeting.

The painting is the result of the combined efforts of an Art Expression group formed at the Wellness Center in October 2007. The art members meet twice a week to express themselves

through a variety of art mediums.

The objective of the group "is to explore and encourage optimistic, good feelings," said Eric Zuniga.

For the painting, each member drew a sketch of what they individually defined as happiness. The program coordinator then transferred the sketches onto a canvas and all members painted the artwork collectively. The production time took a month and a half.

The painting was an opportunity for members to express themselves creatively. One member, Hugh*, a first time artist, jokingly described the project as "a big love affair".

Others find the art project therapeutic to their mental wellness.

Christy*, a member who joined the group in February 2008 said, "It [the painting] helped me a lot ...feel better [to] not think about the problems at home." Since then, she continues to participate in the group's weekly session. She also pointed out proudly that the ponies in the painting are hers "because I enjoyed drawing ponies a lot."

Another member, who asked not to disclose her name, commented, "The art help me get out of bed...to have plans for the future."

The Art Expression group displayed the painting for donation at the 6th Annual Integrated Services Conference and Annual Consumer Art show sponsored by California Institute of Mental Health (CIMH) in early April 2008. All organizations interested in housing the painting submitted a short essay on why they wanted the painting. The Art Expression group members later read the short essays and made the final decision on awarding *Happiness*.

The MHSOAC was successful in competing to receive *Happiness*. The painting is currently displayed at the MHSOAC office in Sacramento.

* First names listed to protect privacy.

Feldman Continues Work in Mental Health

By Gia Vang

He's described by colleagues as someone with amazing grace and focus. Some also say he's a wonderful teacher, writer and creative thinker.

Dr. Saul Feldman has left the post of a commissioner because he no longer holds the position of a Health Services Provider, but says he will continue to work with the Commission. He said his continued involvement will range from helping to jumpstart committees, such as the Services Committee, to consulting for groups such as the Evaluations

Committee.

Just like his continued involvement with the Commission, his goals for the Act carry on as well. Dr. Feldman said they are not any different from when he was a commissioner.

"The Act represented a new and very important step," he said. "While the Act is a California Act, my hope is that it'll have repercussions across the country."

Dr. Feldman said it's important for hope to become reality, so he will continue educating others about the Mental Health Services Act.

Recently, he was asked to write an article about the Act in the Journal Health Affairs. Dr. Feldman said he is excited

about this project. The 2,000-word article will appear sometime next year.

MHSOAC consulting psychologist, Dr. Deborah Lee, said Feldman has devoted himself throughout his career to advancing mental health from many different angles.

"I consider the opportunity to know and work with him to be one of life's great blessings," Dr. Lee said.

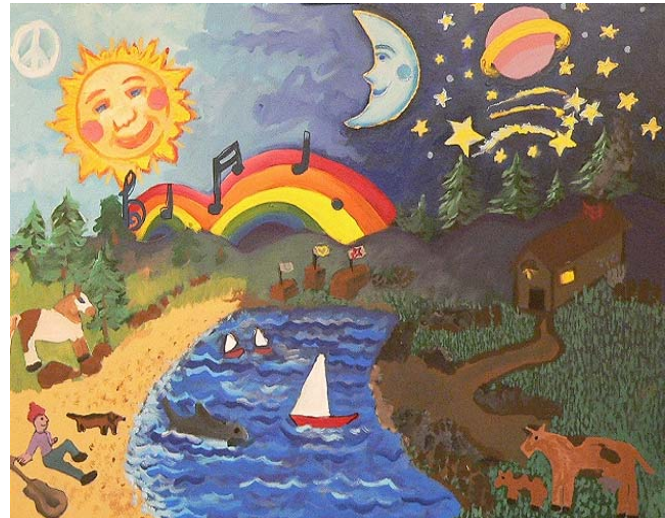
Feldman feels the next steps for the commission are to make certain it develops an unbiased, comprehensive evaluation so that independent experts can evaluate the progress of the Act, he said.

In addition to Dr. Feldman's plans to continue working with the commission, he also sits on various boards, such as the San Francisco Suicide Prevention Center, and is president of the Bay Area Foundation which primarily deals with mental health.

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Happiness

Consumer Art, Wellness & Recovery Center, Sacramento

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



NEXT COMMISSION MEETINGS

January 30, 2009-Santa Rosa

February 27, 2009-Sacramento

April 24, 2009- Sacramento

May 29, 2009-San Diego

Visit us on the Web for the most current meeting information:

<http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSOAC/default.asp>