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**Health and Human Services Committee
HHR2009/2010-002**

Final Report

**Trinity County
Behavioral Health Services
Review**

This Report was Approved
on May 12, 2010

Approved



Ronald D. Ward

2009-2010 Trinity County Grand Jury

Health and Human Services Committee

Behavioral Health Services Review

Summary

Trinity County Grand Jury elected to review the Behavioral Health and Services (BHS) program development under the umbrella of the Proposition 63, California Mental Health Services Act of 2004 (MHSA). To date Trinity County is one of only five counties that has applied for all six elements of MHSA and received approval.

Background

State of California voters passed Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, in November 2004. MHSA was enacted to fund, expand, and transform California's county mental health service delivery systems for children, youths, adults, older adults, and the needs of the disadvantaged population. MHSA seeks to lessen the long-term effect on families and individuals due to untreated serious mental illness through prevention, early intervention, and medical and supportive care. Included in the MHSA goal is the support, development, and use of best practices and innovation. Implementing MHSA is also expected to reduce the financial impact on local, county and state governments.

In order to receive MHSA funding each county is required to develop a three-year plan using the following components:

- Element (1) Community Program Planning
- Element (2) Community Services and Support
- Element (3) Capital Facilities and Information Technology
- Element (4) Prevention and Early Intervention
- Element (5) Innovation
- Element (6) Workforce Education and Training.

When funding is received and programs are implemented, status of the programs must be reported in the required format to the California State Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC). This report must be accompanied with detailed data to support the submission. As mandated by MHSA, funding cannot be appropriated or transferred to another county or state agency. In addition, MHSA funding may not be used for any

incarceration or forced treatment of a consumer. (The use of the word “consumer” is now used by the state as opposed to patient or client.)

The MHSA is based on the “Recovery Model” intervention philosophy that a consumer with severe significant mental illness can and does recover. This model focuses on the consumer and family while providing an integrated system of services to aid in recovery.

Method of Investigation

BHS Interim Director, senior staff, and county officials were interviewed. The documents received were reviewed and used to expand on, and corroborate, the information provided in the interviews.

Discussion

Element (1) - Community Program Planning uses a local review process for development of annual updates to the integrated plan for MHSA resources. Two focus groups were held to solicit stakeholder input. Stakeholders are consumers and family member groups. A Public Hearing notice was placed in the Trinity Journal on March 25, 2009, and flyers were placed on bulletin boards and the BHS website. A PowerPoint presentation was created and shown during the Public Hearing on April 20, 2009.

Element (2) - Community Support Services (CSS) contains several programs. In program one, two drop-in centers were established: “Milestones” in Weaverville and “Horizons” in Hayfork. These centers are designed for community consumers who self-identify with a mental health diagnosis and are provided with a variety of services and activities. A full-service partnership (FSP) program was implemented. Upon approval by the Trinity County Mental Health Advisory Board, consumers enrolled in the FSP are provided with assistance that may not be covered under other programs. For example, MHSA funding can be used if an FSP consumer has a specific illness requiring special medication and the cost is not covered under Medi-Cal or Medicare. BHS reported the biggest success for CSS is in housing, which is accomplished through underwriting rentals for consumers. Having a safe and secure place to live enables a consumer with a mental illness to eat well, receive treatment, and take his/her medication on a consistent basis. Additionally it can assist in reducing homelessness.

Element (3) - Capital Facilities funding, along with monies from CSS, has allowed the purchase and development of a seven-bed Board and Care Home (Alpine House) for FSPs. This facility will provide mental health consumers with a licensed in-county residential intervention facility. Element (5) Innovation provides for a more detailed description of the program purpose. Currently this intervention program is being provided out-of-county and is limited by costs and distance.

Element (3) - Information Technology (IT) funding is being used to meet the State of California mandate that all counties go to electronic health records (EHR) by 2014. The Kings View Behavioral Health Services IT is assisting the implementation of the EHR

system. IT funding is also being used to convert the current software system (CMHC) to the new software system (Anasazi). Kings View has a well-established method of delivering mental health services to consumers in remote areas via video conferencing. Kings View is currently providing this service to six of the smaller counties in the state. Another area of IT being addressed is the installation of a T1 line in Hayfork. The T1 line will enable telemedicine to be brought to consumers instead of requiring them to travel to Weaverville for service. The most recent IT project submitted is Consumer Access to Computing Resources. This project will provide five Internet accesses for consumers at four locations: Weaverville clinic lobby, Milestones and Horizon Centers and two for the FSP residential facility (Alpine House).

Element (4) - Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) is directed toward younger populations where a difference can be made. Funding has allowed the creation of “Challenge Days”, which is well known nationally. This activity is designed to enable youth ages 14-18 to build an integrated relationship with their school and community while forming leadership skills. “Friday Night Live” has been created and placed in schools for ages 12-18. The program sponsors activities which concentrate on diverse cultures and their beliefs and values, encouraging youth to build positive relationships with peers and adults. BHS contracted with Southern Trinity Health Services (STHS) to fund a project in Mad River. STHS provides the school with curriculums on anger management, conflict resolution, and anti-stigma training. The STHS contract requires BHS to receive detailed data on services and number of students served. Another component of PEI is the “Link Center” located at Mountain Valley Elementary School. The purpose of the “Link Center” is to reduce student behavioral problems that would normally be considered as disciplinary problems. Students are sent to the Link Center, where a counselor works with them and their parents to help resolve the issues. Individual or group counseling for students is also available, as well as counseling time slots for students who may have issues impacting their academic abilities.

Element (5) - Innovation was incorporated into the Act to give counties the ability to try new programs and ideas that they believe may work, but do not have evidence that they would work. Funding for Elements (2) and (3) has enabled the purchase and renovation of a house that is to serve as a board and care facility named Alpine House. This board and care facility is planned as a step-down intervention option. The house has seven beds. Using CSS funding, five beds will be designated as permanent/transitional. Bed six will be dedicated as a “respite bed” for a consumer who may be in crisis requiring only a short stay to stabilize and return home. Bed seven will be available for staff on site that will be on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. County Supervisors approved a contract with Willow Glen for the day-to-day operation while BHS will be responsible for the program. This project may be expanded to include peer support (through Milestones Drop-in Center) to consumers housed at Alpine House. It is recognized by the state that this innovative approach may reduce costs while improving current mental health services.

Element (6) - Workforce Education and Training (WET) funding has permitted the hiring of an MHSA Coordinator. The coordinator’s purpose is to focus on all elements of the

Act to ensure the goal of a successful recovery model and effective use of funding. A portion of the WET financial assistance is for scholarship support, which is used to nurture staff that desire to achieve additional training or a higher degree in their field. This support will also promote internal hiring, as well as advancement and retention of staff. WET is committed to the employment of consumers or members of their families to offer recovery model activities at the Milestones drop-in center.

Findings/Recommendations

Finding 1:

Element (1) - Community Program Planning and local review process is conducted as part of the MHSA annual update of the Trinity County's Integrated Plan. As required, a copy is forwarded each fiscal year to the California DMH and to MHSAOC. BHS verified the MHSA 2009-2010 plan was sent to both agencies on June 15, 2009.

Recommendation 1:

None.

Finding 2:

Element (2) - Community Support Services has met their goal of implementing a successful FSP program. Currently there are 12 participants enrolled in FSP receiving services previously unavailable due to lack of Medi-Cal eligibility. Also in place are the two drop-in centers. The centers are supplying peer-motivated services focusing on the recovery model. The plan goals have been met on time. The next goal is to reach the under-represented Native Americans residents in Trinity County.

Recommendation 2:

None.

Finding 3:

Element (3) - Capital Facilities purchased and renovated a board and care residence for FSPs. The facility is scheduled to open in May 2010. This is the first in-county facility, which will house and service consumers who are suffering from serious mental illness. BHS should be complimented on its development of a new in-county mental health service. This service will reduce costs for both the County and its consumers.

Recommendation 3:

None.

Finding 4:

Element (3) - Information Technology – In October 2009 broadband connectivity was installed in Hayfork. Phase 1 of Anasazi has been completed. Consumers are registered, scheduled, and being billed out of Anasazi. October 2009 also saw the start of Phase 2 of Anasazi implementation. In progress are Assessment, Treatment Plans, Progress Notes set up, form development training, and workflow design

Recommendation 4:

None.

Finding 5:

Element (4) - Prevention and Early Intervention – Link Center opened in August 2009 at the Mountain Valley Elementary School. One classroom is fully dedicated to the Center. Currently eighteen students receive counseling once a week. At the present time there are six groups meeting weekly. Each group concentrates on one theme such as: anti-bullying, social development skills, female aggression, and drug and alcohol problems, dealing with ADHD, and developing friendship among male students. Parent interaction with the Center averages out to three a week.

Prevention and Intervention Program (PIP) being offered by STHS has three schools participating. Van Duzen Elementary School has twelve students involved. In 2009 three students from Southern Trinity High School took part in the Emotionally Healthy Teens group while fourteen were enrolled in the Addiction and the Brain group. The third school, Bridgeville Elementary, has fifteen students involved in the Learning Self-Control group, who were referred by teachers and identified as students who could benefit from intervention. BHS is to be commended on its implementation of programs for the positive mental health development of our youth.

Recommendation 5:

None.

Finding 6:

Element (5) - Innovation –The Board and Care FSP facility is scheduled to open in May 2010 and prove the effectiveness of the recovery model and interaction with the drop-in centers. In-county cost to operate the new facility will be \$115 a day per consumer instead of out-of-county costs at \$225 a day.

Recommendation 6:

None.

Finding 7:

Element (6) - Workforce Education and Training has enabled the hiring of an MHSA Coordinator. Last year three scholarships were awarded to people already working in the Trinity County public mental health field. Underwriting this education and training requires participants to commit to return to the County for two years. This year the focus is on having staff members attend one training program to improve their ability to perform their jobs.

Recommendation 7:

None.

Responses Required

In accordance with California Penal Code 933.05 a response is required as indicated below.

None.

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