Mental Health Services Act Workforce Education and Training Plan

Executive Summary

Background

The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Workforce Education and Training (WET) Plan addresses the shortage of qualified individuals who provide services in Orange County's public mental health system. The Plan covers a three-year period: FY06/07, FY07/08, and FY08/09. According to the California Department of Mental Health (DMH) Guidance, Orange County is eligible to receive \$8.2 million in Workforce Education and Training funds to provide programs and services during the specified three-year period.

In 2007, Orange County was approved to receive \$651,797 (part of the \$8.2 million) as Planning and Early Implementation funding. The County has used that \$651,797 to conduct the WET planning process and to hire staff to support that effort. Also, a portion of that funding was used for training, and to develop a child psychiatry residency program.

Needs Assessment

The first step in the planning process was to conduct an assessment of current workforce needs by type of position, ethnicity, and language skills. Major findings from the needs assessment include:

- More than twice the number of unlicensed direct care mental health staff is needed compared to licensed mental health staff.
- The greatest disparity in terms of workforce ethnicity and target population ethnicity is the Latino population. Fifty eight percent of the target population is Latino, while only 28% of the staff is of that ethnicity.
- Although the percentage of Asian Pacific Islander staff is similar to that of the target population (13% as compared to 14%) there is a gap in terms of needed language proficiency.
- The majority of vacant consumer and family member positions are those that require considerable training in mental health, and sometimes licensure.
- There is a need for both additional support staff and direct care staff with proficiency in Spanish, Vietnamese, Farsi and Korean.

Planning

The WET Plan was developed through an extensive community stakeholder process. An advisory group guided the process. Input was collected from approximately 30 focus groups. These groups were composed of a wide variety of stakeholders, including educational institutions, law enforcement, mental health services and supports providers, the National Alliance for the Mentally III (NAMI), each age group, underserved

ethnic/linguistic minority populations, and special communities, such as the deaf and hard of hearing.

Focus groups generated about 100 specific program suggestions for the WET Plan. These were reviewed to determine which met DMH requirements. Then similar proposals were combined to simplify evaluation. Based on the Needs Assessment, the WET Advisory Group reached consensus on a group of proposals that were considered to be high priority for inclusion in the Plan. The MHSA Steering Committee approved the Plan at its March 6, 2008 meeting. It added a proviso that at least 14% of the funding would be dedicated to the Older Adult age group.

The Plan is available for Public Review and Comment for the 30-day period ending May 2, 2008. On May 8, 2008, the Orange County Mental Health Board will hold a hearing on the Plan. The Plan will then sent to the County Board of Supervisors for their approval to submit the Plan to the California Department of Mental Health.

Programs

All five of the allowable WET funding categories were addressed in the Plan. Nineteen specific programs were included in the Plan. Below is a chart showing each program and the category of allowable funding.

Workforce Staffing Support	Training and Technical Assistance	MH Career Pathways	Residency and Internship Programs	Financial Incentive Programs
WET Coordination	Staff Training on EBP	Consumer/Family Member Training to Enter MH Workforce	Grad. Student Intern Supervision	AA & BA Stipends & 20/20 Program
Consumer Employment Support Specialist	Training by Consumers/Family Members	High School Academy	Supervision of Interns: HS AA & BA	Grad. Stipends
WET Regional Liaison	Cultural Competence Training	AA & BA Certificate Programs	AA/BA/MA Program Recruiter	20/20 Program for MH Employees to Attend Grad. School
	Training for Foster Parents & Others	Recovery Education Institute	Psychiatric Residencies and Fellowships	
	MH Training for Law Enforcement			

Conclusion

Orange County's WET Plan is focused on addressing the shortage of qualified individuals working in the public mental health services system. In addition, it proposes strategies to: assist consumers and family members to enter and remain in the workforce, reduce the disparity in ethnicity and language between staff at all levels and the populations served, and ensure that the mental health services provided are recovery-oriented and client/family member-driven. The implementation of this Plan will be carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure that these goals are achieved.