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California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) Awards Suicide Prevention Contracts
*First phase of Mental Health Service Act Statewide Prevention and Early Intervention funds rolled out with
Suicide Prevention Program Contracts*

SACRAMENTO, CA (May 10, 2011) – The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), a joint powers authority (JPA) of counties focused on the efficient delivery of California mental health projects and programs, announced today it took action to begin contract negotiations for the fulfillment of suicide prevention services. Recommended providers approved on May 6, 2011 are Didi Hirsch Psychiatric Services, Transitions Mental Health Association, North Bay Suicide Prevention Project, Family Services Agency of Marin, San Francisco Suicide Prevention, Family Services Central Coast, Kings View Suicide Prevention Program, Institute on Aging Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention (CESP), AdEase, Inc, and LivingWorks Education, LP.

Awardees will provide prevention services to clients throughout California including serving as the focal point for statewide suicide prevention activities, working to reduce service gaps, creating a social marketing campaign, expanding the number and capacity of accredited local suicide prevention hot lines and warm lines, and developing program curricula that will address professionals across systems and disciplines.

“In 2009, nearly 3,800 Californians committed suicide, almost twice as many who were victims of homicide and four times as many who were victims of motor vehicle accidents,” says CalMHSA Board Vice President Wayne Clark, PhD. “This is an epidemic that needs to be addressed.”

Suicide Prevention Statewide Prevention and Early Intervention is one of three statewide projects administered by CalMHSA. Along with Stigma and Discrimination Reduction and the Student Mental Health Initiative, the program was developed under the Mental Health Services Act passed by California voters in November 2004. In 2007, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) approved five prevention and early intervention (PEI) statewide projects and corresponding funding amounts. In 2008, MHSOAC determined that three Statewide PEI projects would be implemented most efficiently and effectively if administered through a single statewide entity and subsequently developed Strategic Plans for each project: the Suicide Prevention Initiative, Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Initiative and the Student Mental Health Initiative. In April 2010, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) contracted with CalMHSA to administer the funding and implementation of mental health services, projects and educational programs at the state, regional and local levels.

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“A central part of CalMHSA's vision is to promote systems and services arising from community mental health initiatives,” says CalMHSA Board President Allan Rawland, ACSW, MSW. “Another central part is to respect the values of the California Mental Health Services Act.”

The announcement of CalMHSA’s Awards Suicide Prevention Contracts comes during National Mental Health Month, originally created in 1949 as National Mental Health Week and later expanded in the late 1960’s to be a month-long annual effort to increase the public’s understanding of mental health issues. Although announcement of the contracts was not planned to coincide with National Health Month, the announcement is reflective of the month’s overall mission which is to focus public attention on mental health concerns.

About CalMHSA

The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is joint powers authority (JPA) of California counties and is focused on the efficient delivery of California Mental Health Projects. Member counties jointly develop, fund, and implement mental health services, projects, and educational programs at the state, regional, and local levels. The following 35 counties are members of CalMHSA: Butte, Colusa, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Imperial, Kern, Lake, Los Angeles, Madera, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc , Monterey, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Trinity, Yuba, Ventura and Yolo. For more information go to <http://calmhsa.org>.

About CDMH

The California Department of Mental Health (DMH), entrusted with leadership of the California mental health system, ensures through partnerships the availability and accessibility of effective, efficient, culturally competent services. This is accomplished by advocacy, education, innovation, outreach, understanding, oversight, monitoring, quality improvement, and the provision of direct services. DMH employs more than 12,000 employees in eight locations throughout the state, including its headquarters in Sacramento, five hospital facilities, two acute care facilities within the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. As a state public agency, DMH has worked hard to transform and improve the state's mental health systems of care by working with the mental health constituency to develop a system of partnerships and coordinated interagency efforts. For more information go to <http://www.dmh.ca.gov>.

About MHSOAC

With the passage of Proposition 63 in November 2004, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission was established to oversee specific parts of the Mental Health Services Act including Prevention and Early Intervention Programs, Innovative Programs, Human Resources, Education and Training Programs and sections of the Adult and Older Adult System of Care Act and Children’s Mental Health Services Act. The Commission has primary responsibility for Prevention and Early Intervention and Innovative Programs including issuing Guidelines and approving county plans for those two program areas. For more information on MHSOAC go to <http://www.dmh.ca.gov/MHSOAC>.

About GHC

Founded in 1954, George Hills Company, Inc. (GHC) provides California's public sector and private insurance carriers best practice claims administration (liability and property) and litigation management services. The firm also provides best practice, turnkey formation and management services to California JPAs. GHC has seven office locations in the State of California, including its corporate headquarters in Rancho Cordova/Sacramento. For more information on GHC go to <http://www.georgehills.com>.

