



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) Enters into Agreement with
California Department of Mental Health (CDMH)

*CalMHSA Member Counties Jointly Develop, Fund, & Deliver California
Mental Health Projects, Services, & Educational Programs at State, Regional, & Local Levels*

SACRAMENTO, CA (May 3, 2010) – The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), a newly formed California joint powers authority (JPA) of counties focused on the efficient delivery of California mental health projects and programs, announced today it has entered into a contract with the California Department of Mental Health (CDMH) to provide program development, administrative oversight, and fiscal management services to county members and other program participants choosing to assign specifically named mental health funds to the joint powers authority. All contract agreements are in accordance with the statutes governing joint powers agreement entities and the Mental Health Services Act.

Both the CDMH and the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) will provide oversight to this new intergovernmental entity acting as a centralized “voice” and charged with both program and fiscal responsibilities. Pursuant to the contract with CDMH, CalMHSA will, as approved by CDMH and MHSOAC, develop and implement Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs, on a statewide or regional basis that conform with the “Guidelines for Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Statewide Programs” issued by MHSOAC and the three State Strategic Plans referenced therein. The focus of these programs will be suicide prevention, expanding resources for student mental health and reducing stigma and discrimination related to mental illness. Funding for these programs will come exclusively from Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds.

Formation of CalMHSA as a JPA was started last year as a collaborative effort of a small group of mental health professionals seeing the need for a more efficient and effective delivery of California mental health projects and programs. As anticipated with the passage of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) in 2004, and validated now with today’s mounting economic

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challenges, counties have seen it is more efficient to act jointly both statewide and regionally in terms of the pooled expenditure of county funds for specified projects. The creation and evolution of CalMHSA will provide for the identification and connection of local mental health needs with local mental health needs in other regions across the state and enable the maximized use of resources through administrative cost sharing and other efficiencies. Further, CalMHSA will help optimize the development and implementation of mental health service training, technical assistance, skill-building, and strategies.

CalMHSA's founding members include: Allan Rawland, MSW, Director, San Bernardino County Department of Mental Health (Current Board President); the late Mike Oprendeck, LCSW, Mental Health Director, Solano County Health and Social Services (Former Board Vice President); Wayne Clark, PhD, Behavioral Health Director, Salinas, California, Monterey County (Current Board Secretary); Curtis Boewer, MPA, MFT, Mental Health Director, Colusa County (Current Board Treasurer); Karen Baylor, PhD, MFT, San Luis Obispo County Mental Health Director; and Denise Hunt, RN, MFT, Behavioral Health Director, Stanislaus County. John Chaquica, CPA, MBA, ARM, President, George Hills Company also assisted in CalMHSA's formation as did Douglas R. Alliston from the Sacramento-based law firm Murphy, Campbell, Guthrie & Alliston.

"CalMHSA has a growing capacity and capability to promote systems and services arising from a shared member commitment to community mental health," says Stephen W. Mayberg, PhD, Director, CDMH. "We are pleased to provide oversight to an organization that supports the values of the California Mental Health Services Act and is focused on collaborative partnerships and pooling efforts in the development and implementation of common strategies and programs."

Says MHSOAC Commissioner Beth Gould, "I am pleased that CalMHSA was formed. The MHSOAC believes that CalMHSA is a very effective means for counties to work together to efficiently and expediently implement PEI Statewide Projects. I think this JPA will be the key to ensuring PEI Statewide Projects are designed and implemented on a statewide basis."

As of today the following 13 counties are members of CalMHSA: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Monterey, Placer, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, Trinity and Yuba. It is anticipated that recent approval of the CalMHSA contract with the CDMH will increase CalMHSA's visibility and lead to an increase in the new JPA's membership.

"Important to note, CalMHSA is not a legislative agency setting codes and regulations, nor it is an advocacy or approval body. It is an organization that exists so counties can jointly develop and fund mental health services and education programs as determined on a regional, statewide, or other basis," says Allan Rawland, MSW, Director, San Bernardino County Department of Mental Health, San Bernardino County.

CalMHSA operates under the value-based tenets of transparency, inclusiveness, accountability, flexibility, scalability and optimum use of resources. Counties interested in joining CalMHSA should contact John E. Chaquica CPA, MBA, ARM, CalMHSA Executive Director, President, George Hills Company, Inc. at 3043 Gold Canal Drive, Suite 200, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6394. He can also be reached via phone at 916.859.4824 and by email at john.chaquica@georgehills.com. "It has been extremely rewarding to be a part of CalMHSA's development—it will be of great value to so many people," says Mr. Chaquica. "All California member counties will see and feel the framework and impact this new JPA will bring to mental health projects and programs being developed and offered."

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About CalMHSA

The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is a 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. For more information on CalMHSA go to <http://www.calmhsa.org>.

About CDMH

The California Department of Mental Health (CDMH), 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. CDMH employs more than 12,000 employees in eight locations throughout the state, including its headquarters in Sacramento, five hospital facilities, and two acute care facilities within the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. As a state public agency, CDMH 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 on CDMH 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. In addition, the firm provides best practice, turnkey 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>.

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