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CalMHSA Top Stories

Message from CalMHSA Board President, Wayne Clark



As we embark on 2012, we know the years ahead will bring new challenges for our County Mental Health Departments, service providers, and the communities we serve. That's why the lasting improvements we are making in California's mental health system are so important to meeting the demands of a diverse and growing state. Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) initiatives are a critical part of a statewide strategy to promote mental wellness, limit the negative impacts of mental illness on individuals, and improve the well-being of our communities.

In these lean times, we are all mindful of making the best use of scarce public dollars. To that end, I am excited by CalMHSA's focus on evaluation as a central part of our business practices, and by our new partnership with RAND Corporation to evaluate our PEI initiatives.

Evaluating what works best and what can be improved upon is a central part of our commitment to providing services that reach Californians with COMPASSION, that meet our challenges head on with ACTION that generates results, and that drive CHANGE we can see—and measure.

Message from CalMHSA Executive Director, John Chaquica



As you know, CalMHSA selected RAND Corporation as our partner to lead a rigorous, objective, evaluation program for the PEI initiatives, keeping with our commitment to fiscal integrity and accountability for MHSAs dollars.

The PEI Statewide Evaluation Project will:

- Improve data collection and evaluate effectiveness of the PEI statewide initiatives
- Identify innovative approaches to improving student mental health, reducing stigma and discrimination, and preventing suicide that can be successfully replicated
- Use research to design policies and programs that improve mental health for all Californians

While RAND will lead this effort, providing oversight and support, a successful evaluation program requires strong collaboration between counties, CalMHSA, RAND, and each of our PEI Program Partners.

Program Partners can expect to learn more about the evaluation process from their contract manager in the coming weeks.

We look forward to working together with RAND Corporation and our 25 Program Partners to assess the collective impact of our PEI programs, and to identify the programs and policies that best meet the goals of improving California's mental wellness.

CalMHSA Approved as CSAC Affiliate

In November 2011, the California State Association of Counties' (CSAC) board approved CalMHSA as an affiliate member. CalMHSA's affiliation with CSAC will provide opportunity for future collaboration on policy and service development that will benefit California's residents.

Statewide PEI Project County Liaisons Designated

On December 14th, staff facilitated the first County Liaison call with approximately 30 participants. In September 2011, Program Director Ann Collentine requested each California County's assistance in identifying one staff member to serve as that County's liaison for the PEI Statewide Projects. As liaison, this staff member is the point person and gatekeeper for his or her County for CalMHSA's Program Partners doing work in and for that County. In addition, the liaison will be the staff member who will know what is taking place in his or her County and can provide informal feedback to County staff.

CalMHSA provides teleconference training for County Liaisons about the PEI Statewide Projects as well as reference material with pertinent information related to the projects. CalMHSA contract staff checks in regularly with County Liaisons to ensure from their perspectives things are moving in a positive direction. CalMHSA's goal is to increase efficiency and minimize the impact of numerous Program Partners making multiple requests to counties.

CalMHSA Valuing Evaluation – RAND Joins CalMHSA Team

From inception of the three Statewide PEI Initiatives, evaluation of the innovative programs currently being implemented by CalMHSA's Program Partners has been at the forefront of everyone's minds. We are being provided a unique opportunity to gather and analyze data as never before.

Program evaluation consists of collecting and analyzing information about the Statewide PEI Initiatives in order to determine their effectiveness and the extent to which they meet the Work Plan and Addendum goals. Program evaluation is useful in (a) understanding, verifying or increasing the program impacts on the target populations, (b) improving program delivery mechanisms to increase efficiency and reduce costs (thereby enhancing program sustainability), (c) identifying program strengths and weaknesses for program improvements, and (d) verifying that the programs are operating as originally planned and having the desired impacts.

CalMHSA has selected RAND Corporation to conduct the statewide evaluation for its Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Initiatives. The focus of the PEI Statewide Evaluation Project is to:

- Improve data collection and evaluate effectiveness of PEI programs,
- Identify innovative programs that can be successfully replicated,
- Use research to design policies and programs that reduce suicide and suicide risks, reduce stigma and resulting discrimination, and improve student mental health in diverse populations across California.

Headquartered in Santa Monica, Calif., the nonprofit RAND Corporation has over 60 years of experience helping improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis. RAND provides strong research support services, including an information infrastructure that facilitates work across multiple locations with external collaborators. The RAND Statistics Group is well-known as one of the top applied statistics groups in the United States. Many of RAND's scientists are nationally recognized mental health research experts who have conducted large-scale, comprehensive, multi-method evaluations that show ability to successfully and routinely disseminate information to diverse stakeholder audiences and demonstrate significant expertise in relevant behavioral health services research areas:

- Behavioral Health Services Research: Trauma Services Center, SAMHSA Primary/Behavioral Health Integration, Media Influences on Adolescent Behavior, Partners in Care for Children, Treatment of Suicidal Adolescents, Efficacy of Trauma in Schools Program, Santa Clara County: Treatment for Children with SUD, Check and Connect, National Behavior Research Coordination Center and First Step to Success Collaborations: Teen Depression Awareness, Getting to Outcomes, Community Partners in Care, Partnered Research Center and Model Demo Coordination Center,
- Dissemination/Social Marketing: Invisible Wounds, Healthy CA Social Marketing, Fresh and Easy Grocery Store Impact and What Works Clearinghouse
- Evaluation Methods: Patient Safety, Safe Start Suicide Prevention, VA Mental Health, Helping Children Cope with Violence/Trauma, First 5 Evaluation, MHSA Impact and Healthy Eating, Obesity Prevention

RAND is collaborating with the following California-based subcontractors:

- The UCLA/RAND/USC NIMH Partnered Research Center for Quality Care
- RI International Policy Division

- Field Research Corporation Social Marketing/Health Promotion Practice Group.

All subcontractors enhance capacity for collaboration and evaluation of community-based programs and both SRI and Field Research Corporation adding to RAND's in-house capacity for data collection using telephone and face-to-face methods in both northern and southern California. The proposed RAND team and partners bring substantial evaluation experience and expertise across the broad range of methodological and substantive content areas that will be required to carry out a collaborative, rigorous, objective and informative statewide evaluation.

Accountability – Biennial Audit Conducted by James Marta & Associates

As directed by the CalMHSA Bylaws, staff has been working with James Marta & Company on an extensive audit for the two-year period ending June 30, 2011. James Marta & Company has 25 years of experience providing accounting and audit services to government entities as well as businesses and individuals. Bringing that depth of experience, they assess more than the numbers, looking in depth at internal controls and procedures.

The completed audit report will be presented to the Board of Directors at their February 10, 2012 meeting.

CalMHSA in Action

Membership Keeps Growing

CalMHSA is well on its way to the goal of 100% participation of California counties, with one new member having joined CalMHSA since November—Del Norte County. With 42 members representing 43 entities, the portion of the State's population served by CalMHSA now stands at 89.6% or 34.5 million residents.

As of late January, four counties have assigned funds and are in the membership process—Amador, Calaveras, Merced and Santa Barbara counties—along with two counties scheduled to present membership applications at the February CalMHSA Board of Directors meeting—Shasta and Ventura counties.

Implementation Statewide

[Statewide Project Summary](#)

Statewide Coordinating Workgroup Convenes

On December 6th, CalMHSA staff hosted the first Statewide Coordinating Workgroup (SCW) for the 25 PEI Program Partners at the Marriott Rancho Cordova. Participants received training on communications and the CalMatrix Portal, as well as an introduction to the RAND team and their evaluation plan. The SCW provides an opportunity for Program Partners and CalMHSA staff to collaborate by providing an arena to exchange information and build effective working relationships while avoiding duplication and improving efficiencies.

The SCW will be held three times throughout the year with the next SCW scheduled for March 7th in Sacramento.

SDR Consortium Project Manager Hired

The Stigma and Discrimination Reduction (SDR) Program One: Strategies for a Supportive Environment Program, Component One: SDR Consortium, was previously awarded to a client-led organization, but contract negotiations were discontinued due to organizational restructuring and ongoing changes. In October 2011, the CalMHSA Board of Directors authorized the CalMHSA Executive Director to recruit a project manager via a Request for Interest (RFI) process and enter into a contract for timely implementation of SDR Program 1, Component 1. At the end of November 2011, an interview panel consisting of staff, Dr. Sandra Naylor Goodwin of CiMH, and two mental health consumers convened, and Adele James was selected as their top candidate. Staff was moved by Ms. James' commitment and compassion as well as her exceptional skill set.

Ms. James has already begun work on implementing SDR Program 1, Component 1, and, by September 30, 2012, will transition the Consortium's administration to a consumer/client-led organization that has the capacity to continue to manage the work of the project until the SDR Initiative concludes on June 30, 2014.

CalMHSA Web Portal Launched

CalMatrix, the CalMHSA web portal, is now being used by staff, Program Partners and county liaisons to efficiently communicate regarding contract fiscal and program reporting, program implementation, and calendaring. CalMatrix is a database and contract management system with a Web portal designed to automate contract tracking and communication. This system will also be able to generate reports on activities related to each contract as well as streamline the invoicing process.

CalMatrix is being used in part by staff as a tool to track the 5,600 deliverables required of the Statewide PEI Program Partners. The number of deliverables is derived from each contract and the number of times Program Partners have indicated they will be reporting on each deliverable (some deliverables are reported on once and others various times).

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