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From: Charles Gray [mailto:Charles.Gray@dmh.ca.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, November 23, 2005 12:13 PM

To: tmckinneyus@yahoo.com

Cc: Carol Hood; David Jones; Norm Wyman

Subject: Re: Fwd: Santa Cruz County's MHSA Plan

Dear Mr. McKinney:

The California Department of Mental Health (DMH) is always interested in hearing feedback from stakeholders regarding county planning. As the DMH, County Operations Liaison to Santa Cruz, I have followed-up with the county regarding your concerns.

To ensure that I address each of your concern, I have bolded you questions followed by my responses:

"I will be submitting written comments about the poor quality of our plan to the SCMHD during the 30 day public review, but I would like to know if DMH has any other means of correcting deficiencies in a county's plan besides the withholding of MHSA funds. We are being threatened by the HSA director that if the plan is not adopted by December, that we will be penalized by DMH and will lose funding. Is this correct? If it is, it is setting the stage for poor plans to be approved by LMHBs across the state in order to secure state funding."

In accordance with DMH Letter 05-02, a prorated amount of the CSS planning estimate will be available to each county based on the date that the plan is approved (i.e., a county will be eligible for 50% of their planning estimate if the plan is approved January 1, 2006.) This is because amount allocated to each county is based on a full implementation period. As plans roll in later, the implementation period is shortened, and the justification for the full planning estimate is weakened.

"I would also like to know if advocates from individual counties can request DMH to look specifically at certain areas of a county's plan that provide incorrect or deceptive information. For example, the over reporting/ exaggeration of the roles parent, clients and family members have had in the leadership and decision making process."

A DMH liaison is assigned to each county to provide technical assistance and ensure that the county's plan meets the intent of the MHSA. DMH is also committed to an inclusive stakeholder process and encourages participation from advocates. In addition to contacting your county, you may call DMH toll free at (800) 972-MHSA (6472) or e-mail mhsa@dmh.ca.gov with feedback regarding county planning.

"I would also like DMH to be especially aware that our county moved ahead with the 30 day review period even though our county is in the middle of transit strike and there is no bus transportation in the entire county. Our clients are very dependent on this form of transportation and it seems very poor judgment to not extend the public comment period to compensate for this situation."

DMH encourages counties to be responsive to the needs of its constituents as issues come up. I discussed this matter with the Santa Cruz director and was apprised that taxi passes and transportation were provided by the county during the strike. In light of these facts and review of the Santa Cruz Community Program Planning, the county has complied with DMH requirements for community involvement.

Please note that DMH developed protocols and review tools to ensure that each county's CSS plan is in compliance with the standards as outlined in the CSS requirements. Each CSS plan will

be reviewed by a 9-member review team, which is made up of 3 client/family members and 1 children/family policy expert, in addition to others. During the CSS review meeting, which for Santa Cruz is anticipated to be held in January '06, the Review Team will verify whether the County included its stakeholders in its CSS plan prior to final approval.

I hope this outlines DMH's commitment and role in this process. Again, I appreciate you sharing your concerns. DMH does value and looks into the concerns of the community. Thank you for your consideration. Charles

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