

CULTURAL COMPETENCE ADVISORY BOARD (CCAB)

IMPROVEMENT PLAN TO REDUCE STIGMA AND ENHANCE PENETRATION RATES AMONG HARD-TO-REACH POPULATIONS

Marin's MHSA Plan continuously strives to improve the penetration rate among the hard-to-reach populations, as evidenced by the proposed sustaining and/or increasing funding levels for programs and services that have proven to reduce barriers and improve access to services. Marin will also further examine best-practice approaches to ensure that the system is poised to meet one of its underlying goals of achieving and maintaining health equity. This will involve a multi-level approach that will work with policy makers, administrators, management, line staff, consumers, consumer advocates and contract agency providers to ensure that the process is inclusive and representative of the stakeholder community.

Beginning in FY2014-15, Marin is recommending a full-time Ethnic Service Manager (ESM) position be added, 50% funded through MHSA Community Services and Supports and 50% funded through other mental health revenue sources. The ESM will be available to consult with administrative, management and line staff throughout the division related to policy, improving culturally competent service delivery, outreach and engagement, and access in a culturally competent and strategic manner. The ESM will also serve as the communication bridge (liaison) between internal staff and the stakeholder community on emerging/current trends, issues, ideas and concerns that pertain to the cultural competence efforts being undertaken by MHSUS.

In 2013 the Mental Health and Substance Use Services Division (MHSUS) re-established a Cultural Competence Advisory Board (CCAB). Whereas the past board was comprised only of MHSUS staff, this current board is comprised of MHSUS management, line staff of MHSUS, contract agency providers, consumer advocates, consumers, community leaders from ethnic communities and an administrative aide to one of the county's Supervisors. This 21-member board is tasked to analyze data, review existing improvement plans, examine practice approaches (evidenced-based and community-defined promising practices) and make recommendations related to policy, service delivery, staffing and training needs, and system improvements. There are three (3) existing working committees within the Board: Training, Policy, and Access.

Efforts are also under way to explore the feasibility of establishing a similar board in West Marin, the outlying coastal area of Marin where there is a high concentration of under-served Latino immigrants who work on ranches and farms. Designated MHSUS staff has been attending established monthly service providers' collaborative meetings to assess the area's mental health and substance use service needs, and to develop collaborative relationships with providers, community leaders and residents. Continuing efforts will be undertaken to ensure that West Marin's under-served communities, particularly Latinos, will have an increased voice and understanding of current and future mental health and substance use services.

Lastly, MHSA will promote and foster culturally appropriate innovative and/or promising practices that can further work to reduce stigma and discrimination, and that will improve access for the hard to reach and under-served communities. This process has already begun as evidenced by two recent grant-writing workshops that were offered to, and conducted for, historically unfunded individuals and grassroots organizations (see Appendix D – Grant Writing Workshops). One workshop was conducted at a local church in the multi-cultural community of Marin City, while the other was conducted at the Health and Human Services Wellness Campus, located in the predominantly Latino neighborhood, the Canal community. A total of 87 participants throughout the county participated in the workshops. A consultant was hired to provide technical assistance to workshop participants to support them in their efforts to equitably compete for future funding opportunities through the county Request for Proposal process with well-established organizations that already have the organizational and infrastructural capacity to write and submit effective grants.