

**Marin County Department of Health & Human Services  
Division of Community Mental Health Services**

**Mental Health Services Act  
Draft Prevention & Early Intervention Plan**

**People's Summary**

In November 2004, California voters approved Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), intended to expand and transform community mental health services throughout California. While the proposition passed with 54% of the vote statewide, Marin County voted 63% in favor. The MHSA raises additional taxes for the State, which are then allocated to respective county mental health programs under extensive regulations developed by the State Department of Mental Health.

However, it will not be money alone that transforms the public mental health system. The greatest promise of the Mental Health Services Act is not the additional funding: it is a vision of outreach and engagement, a philosophy of recovery and wellness, a belief in the strength and resiliency of each person with mental illness, and a recognition that they are to be embraced as equal members of our community. Recovery from mental illness is not only possible, it is to be expected.

This is a brief summary of Marin County's plan for Prevention and Early Intervention. The complete document represents a proposed three-year plan for expanding mental health services throughout the community. To read the full plan, go to [www.co.marin.ca.us](http://www.co.marin.ca.us) or call 415-499-6769 to request a paper copy by mail.

**Principles**

Prevention and early intervention transforms the mental health system to a "help first" rather than "fail first" approach by incorporating the following concepts:

- Community Collaboration to develop a shared vision for services
- Cultural Competence to effectively serve underserved communities
- Individual/Family Driven Programs that empower participants in their recovery
- Wellness Focus that includes concepts of resilience and recovery
- Integrated Service Experience that places mental health services in locations where participants obtain other critical services
- Outcomes-based Design that demonstrates the effectiveness of the services

The MHSA has six separate components: Community Planning, Community Services and Supports, Prevention and Early Intervention, Innovations, Capital Facilities and Technology, and Workforce Education and Training. At this point, the Community Planning has been completed, the Community Services and Supports plan has been implemented, and plans have been drafted for Prevention and Early Intervention and Workforce Education and Training. This document addresses the Prevention and Early Intervention plan. Plans for the other components can be viewed on the County website noted above.

### **Planning Process**

An essential first step required by the MHSA was a comprehensive countywide planning process designed to involve the community in identifying unmet needs and recommending programs and services to meet those needs. Marin County's MHSA public planning process began in the fall of 2004. Over the last year, a public planning process focused on Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) was conducted. Following principles outlined in the MHSA, a significant effort was made to be open, transparent, and inclusive of stakeholders including clients, their families, underserved communities, and providers.

Over 200 people and 40 organizations have participated in the Prevention and Early Intervention planning process via focus groups, public meetings, key informant interviews, or serving on a work group or the PEI Committee.

### **Summary of Proposed Programs**

#### Children and Youth Prevention and Early Intervention

This program will provide training and support to staff of childcare and early childhood education sites to identify children whose behavior indicates social/emotional difficulties, develop a plan for meeting the child's needs, and to assist the family. Training will be provided to strengthen staff skills in working with all children and voluntary screening will be available to families for adult depression.

In addition, a broad range of providers working with families will be trained in an evidence-based method for educating and supporting families with parenting challenges.

#### Student Assistance Program

This program increases the capacity of schools to assist students in achieving success. This includes training school staff to effectively respond to problems, such as stigma or behavioral concerns; identifying and assisting at-risk students and their families; improving access to additional services for students and their families. An initial pilot program will take place at Martin Luther King Middle School.

### Transition Age Youth Prevention & Early Intervention

This program will provide mental health education, screening, and assistance in collaboration with agencies serving transition age youth (16-25 years old). This age group is at risk for substance abuse, justice system involvement, and onset of serious mental illness.

### Canal Community-Based Prevention & Early Intervention

This program will provide mental health education, screening, and assistance in a community-based organization in the Canal District, with an emphasis on transition age youth. These services will help to bridge the cultural and language barriers that contribute to this neighborhood being underserved for mental health needs.

### Integrating Behavioral Health in Primary Care

This program will expand the mental health services available within health care settings for underserved populations. Services will include mental health education, screening, and assistance that is coordinated with physical health care services.

### Home Delivered Meals Prevention & Early Intervention

This program will provide mental health education, screening, and assistance to home-bound older adults who receive home delivered meals. This population is at high risk for depression and alcohol and/or medication abuse.

## **State Administered Projects**

Marin County PEI funds will also be used to complement and support two state-administered projects:

### Suicide Prevention

Locally, the suicide hotline capacity will be expanded to include Spanish speaking services. In addition, follow-up will be provided to individuals who either express suicidal ideation or attempt suicide.

### Stigma and Discrimination Reduction

Locally, an awareness campaign will be conducted to reduce stigma and increase awareness of mental health concerns and services.

## **Outcomes**

The following outcomes will be expected for individuals and families in Marin:

- Increased awareness about emotional and mental health and about resiliency and recovery skills.
- Reduction in mental health and substance use risks and symptoms.
- Reduction in school drop-out rates, criminal justice system involvement and violence.
- Increased access to brief mental health interventions.

## **Funding**

MHSA PEI funding is approximately \$1 million per year for an indefinite number of years. Programs will be implemented by community-based organizations, building on the infrastructures that already exist. Organizations can apply for funding to implement the programs through a Request for Proposal process.

## **Conclusion**

An extensive community planning process has resulted in a Prevention and Early Intervention plan that:

- Builds on and helps to coordinate the systems and services that already exist;
- Expands services for underserved communities;
- Implements evidence-based and promising practices that show results; and
- Provides services in community settings to increase access and reduce stigma.

While it is the intent of the MHSA to “transform” the public mental health system, it comes at a time when Community Mental Health Services is faced with serious challenges—particularly; the need for services is larger than the funding available. Funding from the MHSA PEI expands early interventions that increase quality of life and reduce the need for more intensive services. This is an important step in moving toward a vision of wellness and recovery and improving access to mental health services for all who need them.