Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Workforce Education and Training (WET)
Program Overview

Background

Passed in November 2004 by California voters, Proposition 63 – the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) – imposes a one percent tax on personal income in excess of $1 million to support the public mental health system (PMHS) via prevention, early intervention and services. Historically underfunded, the PMHS suffers from a shortage of mental health providers in addition to mal-distribution, lack of diversity, and under-representation of practitioners with client experience.

The MHSA included a component for Mental Health Workforce Education and Training (WET) programs. The Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 5892(a) (1) specifies that a “trust fund” be created and that money within the trust fund “be expended consistent” with the WET Component in MHSA. WIC Section 5892(e) (1) states that in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004-05, 45% of the total MHSA revenues shall also be deposited in to that fund. WIC Section 5892(a) (1) states that in FYs “2005-06, 2006-07, and in 2007-08, 10 percent shall be placed in the trust fund to be expected for education and training programs”. WIC Section 5892(b) also allows counties to deposit up to 20 percent of their funds into the education and training fund. Although this fund was never established, a total of $444.5 million was made available for the education and training fund at the State level with the Department of Mental Health (DMH).

Five-Year Plan: 2008-2012

Pursuant to WIC Section 5820, in 2008, DMH, in concert with stakeholders, developed the Five-Year Workforce Education and Training Development Plan (Five-Year Plan), April 2008-April 2012 which provides a framework for the advancement and development of mental health workforce education and training programs at the County, Regional, and State levels. Specifically, the Five-Year Plan provides the vision, values, mission, measureable goals and objectives, proposed actions and strategies, funding principles, and performance indicators for the use of MHSA WET funds. The Five-Year Plan developed by DMH was approved by the California Mental Health Planning Council in 2008 and covers the period from April 2008 to April 2013 (http://www.oshpd.ca.gov/HPEF/Text_pdf_files/WET/MHSA_FiveYearPlan_5-06-08.pdf). To supplement the Five-Year Plan, DMH also developed a ten-year budget projection for the administration of the $444.5 million that were deposited for the WET component of MHSA. The ten-year budget set aside $210 million to be distributed to counties for local WET program implementation, and $234.5 million to be set aside for the administration of WET programs at the State level.
State level WET programs that were budgeted in the ten-year budget include:

- **Stipend Programs**
  - Stipend Programs are administered through contracts with ten higher educational entities, for graduate students who plan to work in the PMHS. The goals of the stipend programs are to increase the number of licensed mental health professionals in public mental health, and to incorporate the MHSA principles into graduate level curriculum. The graduate degrees funded in the WET stipend program include: Masters of Social Work; Marriage and Family Therapist; Clinical Psychologist; and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. A total of $100 million was authorized for Stipend Programs over 10 years.

- **Mental Health Loan Assumption Program (MHLAP)**
  - MHLAP offers loan assumption to mental health providers in hard-to-fill and/or hard-to-retain positions in the PMHS in exchange for a 12-month service obligation. A total of $75 million was authorized for MHLAP over 10 years.

- **Song-Brown Residency Program for Physician Assistants in Mental Health**
  - Adds a mental health track to the Song-Brown Residency Program for Physician Assistants (PA) as a strategy to address the shortage of Pas that can sign mental health treatment plans and prescribe and administer psychotropic medications. PA programs that train second-year residents to specialize in mental health are eligible to apply for augmented funding. A total of $5 million was authorized for Song-Brown over 10 years.

- **Psychiatric Residency Program**
  - The Psychiatric Residency Program ensures that psychiatric residents receive training in the County public mental health system, working with the populations prioritized by that community. Further, psychiatric residents are encouraged to continue working in the California PMHS after their rotations end. A total of $13.5 million was authorized for Psychiatric Residency Programs over 10 years.

- **Client and Family Member Statewide Technical Assistance Center**
  - The Client and Family Member Statewide Technical Assistance Center promotes the employment of mental health clients and family members in the mental health system. A total of $8 million was authorized for the Technical Assistance Center over 10 years.

- **Regional Partnerships**
  - Five Regional Partnerships (RPs) have formed across the state to promote building and improving local workforce, education and training resources. The RP collaboratives represent Bay Area counties; Central Valley counties; Southern counties; Los Angeles County; and Superior Region counties. RPs include representation from mental health, community agencies, educational/training entities, consumers, family members, and other partners to plan and implement programs that build and improve local workforce education and training resources.
Each RP focuses on projects and goals specific to their regional needs. A total of $27 million was authorized for Regional Partnerships over 10 years.

MHSA WET Program Transfer

In July 2012, following the elimination of DMH, the MHSA WET programs were transferred to the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD). OSHPD received budget authority to expend remaining MHSA WET State funds. An additional one-time $6 million in unallocated WET funds were transferred to OSHPD, to be appropriated after stakeholder engagement for purposes of WIC Sections 5820, 5821, 5822 in a manner subject to requirements set forth in WIC Section 5820(a) (e) and WIC Section 5848.

MHSA WET Five-Year Plan: 2014-2019

Per WIC Section 5820, OSHPD is accountable for the development of the next Five-Year Plan that will be in effect from April 2014 – April 2019. To ensure the development of a comprehensive plan, OSHPD is employing a robust stakeholder engagement process to engage diverse stakeholder groups through different strategies including the WET Advisory Committee and WET Five-Year Plan Advisory Sub-Committee, community forums/focus groups, key-informant interviews, webinars and surveys, and county site visits.

The Five-Year Plan will provide the vision, values, mission, measurable goals and objectives, proposed actions and strategies, funding principles, and performance indicators for the use of MHSA WET funds for the period from April 2014 to April 2019. Per WIC Section 5822, the next Five-Year Plan shall incorporate the following elements:

A. Expansion plans for the capacity of postsecondary education to meet the needs of identified mental health occupational shortages.
B. Expansion plans for the forgiveness and scholarship programs offered in return for a commitment to employment in California's public mental health system and make loan forgiveness programs available to current employees of the mental health system who want to obtain Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Arts, master's degrees, or doctoral degrees.
C. Creation of a stipend program modeled after the federal Title IV-E program for persons enrolled in academic institutions who want to be employed in the mental health system.
D. Establishment of regional partnerships between the mental health system and the educational system to expand outreach to multicultural communities, increases the diversity of the mental health workforce, to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, and to promote the use of web-based technologies, and distance learning techniques.
E. Strategies to recruit high school students for mental health occupations, increasing the prevalence of mental health occupations in high school career development programs such as health science academies, adult schools, and regional occupation centers and programs, and increasing the number of human service academies.
F. Curriculum to train and retrain staff to provide services in accordance with the provisions and principles of Part 3 (commencing with Section 5800), Part 3.2 (commencing with
Section 5830), Part 3.6 (commencing with Section 5840), and Part 4 (commencing with Section 5850) of this division.

G. Promotion of the employment of mental health consumers and family members in the mental health system.

H. Promotion of the meaningful inclusion of mental health consumers and family members and incorporating their viewpoint and experiences in the training and education programs in subdivisions (a) through (f).

I. Promotion of meaningful inclusion of diverse, racial, and ethnic community members who are underrepresented in the mental health provider network.

J. Promotion of the inclusion of cultural competency in the training and education programs in subdivisions (a) through (f).

The Five-Year Plan will be accompanied by a five-year budget that will allocate remaining State MHSA WET program funding for the next five years. This five-year budget will allow the opportunity provide changes to the funds remaining from the prior ten-year budget developed in 2008. Per WIC Section 5820 (e), the Five-Year Plan requires final approval from the Mental Health Planning Council by April 2014.