

Staff Briefing #95

February 24, 2006

Action Items Regarding Clinics Being Top Priority

As a follow up to Staff Briefing #92 I wanted to highlight concrete actions and initiatives that are in the process of being reviewed and implemented. I wanted to immediately brief staff on the efforts that have been occurring for many months in regards to improving the situation in our clinics.

1. Salary Inequity Issues

As many of you know, I have been concerned about salaries in our department. I have received questions about what the Director's role is in the process of requesting salary studies be conducted for inequities in certain classifications. To clarify, salary increases are part of annual union contract negotiations. The union and county each year negotiate to review a limited number of salary inequities for classifications that will be studied. Directors cannot unilaterally recommend salary increases outside the union negotiation process. However, I can and have worked closely with the County Human Resources Department, SEIU 620 and the UAPD (Union of American Psychiatrists and Dentists) to facilitate salary reviews.

A recent example is increased salaries for the Psychiatrists, Psychiatric Nurses, and Psychiatric Technicians. This will hopefully provide more stability in medication support as well as ensure that our psychiatric hospital is adequately staffed.

I have confirmed with Susan Paul, Director of Human Resources, that the ADMHS Case Workers and the ADMHS Practitioners salaries will be reviewed, as part of the annual salary inequity studies. I will be working with SEIU Local 620 and our County Human Resources Department on supporting this process. The Department is aware of possible inequalities in pay for these classifications and supports rectifying any

findings of inequity as a result of this study.

2. Overcrowding in our clinics.

As many of you are aware, we have procured the De La Vina Street site and discussions are occurring regarding staffing our new CARES program in South County. In Santa Maria we continue to negotiate for the purchase of the Carmen Lane building where CARES North and the Crisis Residential Services will be located. We are in discussions with the county about consolidating our Calle Real facilities in the Veteran's Building once their new Veterans facility is completed in Santa Maria. Also, in response to the overcrowding at Foster Road, we are exploring other options beyond Carmen Lane in Santa Maria.

Alternate Work Schedule

3. I am committed to creating a balance between program coverage and offering quality life/work options to help recruit and retain staff. I realize there has been some confusion about the issue of offering alternate work schedules. A few years ago I was receiving staff hotlines regarding inconsistencies in implementing 4/10 and 9/80 schedules throughout the department. In response to those concerns, we created a admin/staff task force to work on developing a consistent policy. This task force included the input of staff at all levels.

The policy continued 4/10's for those staff that worked after hours and on weekends, but not in clinics that are open from 8-5 p.m. 9/80 schedules were retained at all levels. I realize the 4/10's have become a controversial issue and the implementation of this policy has been difficult. I and other administrative staff have met with SEIU Local 620 Representatives, Union Stewards and County Human Resource staff to dialogue on this issue. A work group between the County HR, MH Admin and staff has been developed to resolve this issue. The major principal for me is that the clinics are covered and adequately staffed to provide support to staff and clients on a daily

basis. I want to reiterate that I am committed to giving staff, whose work is extremely challenging many options to take care of their health and well-being. Currently these options include 9/80 scheduling availability and other alternative schedules depending on the function of your work site. We are committed to maintaining these options and reviewing other options, as well.

4. Recruitment Strategies

In order to expedite the hiring processes we are working closely with County Human Resources on a number of issues. We have reinstated ongoing recruitments for the ADMHS Practitioner classifications. We also have a designated recruiter assigned to work with ADMHS Human Resources to assist in targeting hard-to-fill positions and to attract applicants, particularly bilingual, bicultural applicants. We are actively developing an Extra Help pool for anticipated and unanticipated vacancy needs that may arise. And, finally, Fiscal, Human Resources and the Division & Program Managers are working on streamlining the hiring process to expedite the hiring of qualified staff. The major principle is that our processes assure continual hiring of quality staff in the context of our financial resources. Staff efforts to attend to billing for services will allow us to expand treatment resources.

I will be forwarding more detailed Staff Briefings on these projects/issues as they come to completion, but I wanted to make sure staff are aware that concrete efforts are being made to improve the quality of the work environment for both staff and clients.

- James L. Broderick, Ph.D., Director