

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

F A C T S H E E T

**APPROVE EXPENDITURES FOR THE SECOND
CALIFORNIA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY CONFERENCE
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)
(3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

Request approval to host and conduct the Second Annual California Mental Health Advocacy Conference at the Wilshire Grand Los Angeles Hotel, including space, catering, and other necessary arrangements. The conference will host workshops to benefit the mental health system, reduce mental illness stigma, and promote wellness and recovery of mental health clients, their families and multiple Los Angeles County communities.

REQUEST

Authorize the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to expend funds to conduct the Second Annual California Mental Health Advocacy Conference to be held on April 15 and 16, 2010, at an estimated cost of \$86,000, fully funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Prevention and Early Intervention Early Start Stigma and Discrimination Project; authorize the Director of Mental Health, or his designee, to execute an agreement with the Wilshire Grand for space and catering services for the Conference at an estimated total cost of \$61,000; authorize DMH to purchase food and beverages for County employees and consumers attending the Conference as an exception to Section 5.40.097, Incidental Expenses, of the Los Angeles County Code, which limits such purchases to \$500 per occurrence and \$5,000 annually; and to award approximately 200 scholarships to support consumers, community members, and family members who are unable to pay the \$200 registration fee. This total estimated value of \$40,000 for scholarships is not included in the conference total cost.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION

These actions will permit DMH to host and conduct the Second Annual California Mental Health Advocacy Conference to be held on April 15 and 16, 2010 at the Wilshire Grand. In support of the mental health system in Los Angeles County, the Conference will host approximately 10 workshops that are aligned with the County's Strategic Plan's goals and strategies. Conference participants, to include community members and outside agencies, will receive information regarding leading-edge research and tools

that combat stigma and discrimination, and promote dignity, social inclusion, and effective individual systems advocacy at the individual and institutional levels.

The conference is required at this time because it will support DMH in meeting the requirements of its State-approved MHSA plans. A major mandate of the MHSA is to reach the unserved and underserved populations to support their recovery from mental illness. This Conference focuses on providing the education and training to advocates with essential tools and strategies for advocacy awareness that will assist in providing insight, feedback, and direction from the community, stakeholders, and leadership in what advocacy needs are unmet and most urgent. This conference also includes an award ceremony to recognize individuals for their outstanding work in legislative, systems, and individual advocacy.

BACKGROUND

In April 2008, DMH conducted the First Annual California Mental Health Advocacy Conference that united advocates, providers, family members, clinicians, parents, and consumers in a unique forum designed to generate discussion regarding change strategy and skills development, and provided the opportunity to attendees to hear from State and national leaders on modifying mental health systems to empower diverse and underserved communities. This two-day conference will not only continue to serve as a learning forum for Los Angeles County mental health consumers, their family members and program staff, but it will also be used to emphasize the MHSA as a venue for transformation in fostering better services for all communities.

Day One of the Conference will focus primarily on stigma/discrimination and macro-level advocacy with an emphasis on systems' change. Roundtable discussions will be held to identify systematic issues and community needs. An award ceremony will recognize individuals for their outstanding work in legislative, systems, and individual advocacy.

Day Two will focus on more specific topics on stigma/discrimination, with expert panel discussions and skills' training. Information gathered through the conference will be used to target, develop and refine County-wide training efforts in line with the MHSA Workforce Development, Education and Training Plan.

Committee representatives will be utilizing hotel rooms the night before the conferences to ensure on-site logistical coordination of exhibit booths, signage, and conference materials. DMH will enter into agreements with the Conference site following Board approval. A deposit of \$2,500 will be made to ensure the reservation of hotel space within two weeks of signing the contract.

Board approval of the recommended actions will enable the Director of Mental Health to execute an agreement with the Wilshire Grand for catering services and provide DMH with the necessary authority to expend funds in support of this Conference.

DMH Contact:

Cathy Warner
(213) 738-2756
CWarner@dmh.lacounty.gov

APPROVED BY:

DMH Program – Cathy Warner
DMH Contracts – Larry Quan
Chief Executive Officer – Angela Yoon
County Counsel – Doraine Meyer