

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

**F A C T   S H E E T**

**APPROVE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FOURTH ANNUAL  
CONNECTIONS FOR LIFE THROUGH  
EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION CONFERENCE  
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)  
(3 VOTES)**

**SUBJECT**

Request approval to host and conduct the Fourth Annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference at the California Endowment Center for Health Communities.

**REQUEST**

Authorize the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to expend funds to conduct the Fourth Annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference to be held on April 7, 2010, at an estimated total cost of \$7,300, fully funded by Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Training funds

**PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION**

These actions will permit DMH to host and conduct the Fourth Annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference to be held on April 7, 2010 at the Endowment. In support of promoting the wellness and recovery of mental health clients in Los Angeles County, the conference will offer consumers the information and community resources that support their journey to independence and self-determination. This conference also includes an award ceremony to recognize the successes consumers have achieved in attaining their employment and/or education goals, as well as monolingual Spanish-speaking interpreters that are required at the conference to translate for the monolingual consumers in attendance.

The conference is required at this time because it will support DMH in accomplishing elements 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 provides an important opportunity to support the tenet of transformation by offering a learning opportunity to consumers who are reticent to work or attend school because of their mental illness.

## **BACKGROUND**

Since 2007, DMH and the Mental Health Commission have sponsored an annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference. This conference unites consumers who are employed, volunteering and/or attending school, consumers whose recovery goals include employment and/or education and others who work in the employment and education field. This conference supports the tenet of transformation contained in the MHSA.

Connections for Life Through Employment and Education is a truly transformative conference that offers a learning opportunity for consumers who are reticent to work or attend school because of their mental illness. Many of the consumers who attend the conference were gainfully employed or enrolled in school prior to being diagnosed with a chronic and persistent mental illness. These consumers will learn about the successes other consumers have achieved in attaining their employment and/or education goals. Consumers will acquire a more fundamental understanding of the “no wrong door” approach to obtaining employment. Consumers will gain a heightened awareness of their employment and/or educational capabilities.

Connections for Life Through Employment and Education also provides valuable community resources to consumers that are needed to support their interest in employment and education. The community resource providers available to consumers at this conference include Los Angeles Unified School District, State of California Department of Rehabilitation, Self Help and Recovery Exchange (SHARE), In Home Supportive Services, WorkSource Centers, Social Security Administration, County Client Coalition and National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

This conference will offer consumers the information and community resources that support their journey to independence and self-determination. Consumers will join in a dialogue of strength, recovery and wellness. This unique opportunity will reinforce the power of hope and positive thinking and provide an environment that envisions solutions to the many challenges of having a mental illness. This conference also includes an award ceremony to recognize the successes consumers have achieved in attaining their employment and/or education goals.

This is an all day conference with about 200 DMH consumers attending. Catering services are needed because many of the consumers attending the conference do not have the financial resources to pay for breakfast and lunch and/or lack the transportation resources to access a restaurant and have breakfast and lunch within the

Fact Sheet  
Fourth Annual Connections for Life  
Through Employment and Education Conference  
Page 3

allocated break times. Serving breakfast and lunch at the conference also provides consumers with the opportunity to network and share personal resources.

**DMH Contact:**

Kathleen Daly  
(213) 480-3619  
KDaly@dmh.lacounty.gov

**APPROVED BY:**

DMH Program – Kathleen Daly  
DMH Contracts – Larry Quan  
Chief Executive Officer – Angela Yoon  
County Counsel – Doraine Meyer

FS\_CFLConf\_gt