

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

**F A C T   S H E E T**

**APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO A SOLE SOURCE AGREEMENT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS, INC., DBA AWAKENINGS (SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 4)  
(3 VOTES)**

**SUBJECT**

Request approval of a sole source agreement with Southern California Alcohol and Drug Programs, Inc., dba Awakenings to provide mental health treatment services for hearing impaired, mentally ill individuals.

**REQUEST**

1. Approve and authorize the Director of Mental Health (Director), or his designee, to prepare, sign and execute a new Legal Entity (LE) agreement with Southern California Alcohol and Drug Programs, Inc., (SCADP) dba Awakenings to provide residential mental health treatment services for hearing impaired individuals who are ready for discharge from Institutions for Mental Disease (IMDs), effective upon Board approval through June 30, 2013. The annual Maximum Contract Amount (MCA) of \$200,000 will be funded by County General Funds (CGF) in the amount of \$92,738, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds in the amount of \$17,262, and Federal Financial Participation (FFP) Medi-Cal revenue in the amount of \$90,000.
2. Delegate authority to the Director, or his designee, to prepare, sign, and execute future amendments to the LE agreement with SCADP and establish as a new MCA, the aggregate of the original agreement and all amendments, provided that: 1) the County's total payments to the contractor for each fiscal year do not exceed an increase of 20 percent from the last Board approved MCA; 2) any such increase will be used to provide additional services or to reflect program and/or policy changes; 3) your Board has appropriated sufficient funds for all changes; 4) approval by County Counsel and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or their designees, is obtained prior to any such amendment; 5) County and contractor may by written amendment reduce programs or services without reference to the 20 percent limitation and revise the applicable MCA; and 6) the Director will notify your Board of agreement changes in writing within 30 days after execution of each amendment.

## **PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION**

The recommended actions will allow the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to enter into a sole source agreement with SCADP to provide residential mental health treatment services for hearing impaired individuals who are ready to be discharged from IMDs. Presently, significant barriers exist for deaf/hard of hearing persons receiving mental health treatment primarily due to the lack of service access. Due to the personal nature of mental health treatment, the use of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters is not the best method of service delivery for persons who are deaf/ hard of hearing. Optimal mental health services for the deaf/hard of hearing mental health clients require clinicians that are fluent in ASL and understand the deaf culture.

There are a number of Los Angeles County residents who are deaf/hard of hearing in IMDs who are there only because Los Angeles County lacks clinicians who can communicate in ASL. It would be inappropriate to place these individuals in facilities where they could not communicate with staff or receive treatment for their mental illnesses.

Due to the acute shortage of providers of residential mental health supportive services to mentally ill individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing, it is necessary to contract with SCADP on a sole source basis. SCADP is uniquely qualified to provide these services because it has provided similar services in Los Angeles County for 22 years and is the only residential treatment program for hearing impaired persons in California. SCADP established the Awakenings residential treatment program in 1988 to serve deaf/hard of hearing individuals. The facility provides addiction treatment, mental health treatment, and transitional and permanent housing, with all services provided in ASL.

## **BACKGROUND or CONTRACTOR/CONTRACTORS**

Before 2004, Los Angeles County residents who were seriously mentally ill and were hearing impaired received treatment in State hospitals. These individuals could not be discharged to lower levels of care in Los Angeles County such as the IMDs because staff in IMDs was unable to communicate using ASL. In 2004, DMH contracted with Sierra Vista, a locked IMD facility in San Bernardino County, for beds to address the need for specialized services for individuals with hearing impairments. In 2008, DMH, in collaboration with Braswell Enterprises, Inc., implemented an IMD program with ASL capacity at Laurel Park in Pomona – an unlocked facility.

Currently, five individuals placed at Laurel Park ASL program are clinically ready to be discharged to a community-based residential mental health treatment program and DMH plans to place them at SCADP. While Laurel Park is an IMD that provides a

higher level of care in a long-term residential setting for these consumers, it does not provide transitional or permanent supportive housing, and is not a Medi-Cal certified facility. SCADP is the only provider of community-based residential mental health treatment program with a transitional or permanent supportive housing for hearing impaired individuals, which is also certified to bill Medi-Cal. Services provided by SCADP will include: assessment; individual and group treatment for both mental illness and substance abuse; crisis intervention; case management; medication support; peer education and support groups; and transitional and permanent housing.

The outpatient clinic will be located at 11500 Paramount Boulevard, Downey, CA 90241 in Service Area 7, Supervisorial District 4.

The agreement format has been approved as to form by County Counsel. The CEO has reviewed the proposed actions. Clinical and administrative staff of DMH will administer and monitor the agreement, evaluate programs to ensure that quality services are being provided to clients, and ensure that agreement provisions and departmental policies are followed.

Approval of these actions will enable DMH to provide needed community-based residential mental health treatment services to deaf/hard of hearing persons currently residing in IMDs who are ready for discharge to lower levels of care.

### **CONTRACTING PROCESS**

In compliance with the County's contracting policy requirements for sole source contracts, DMH notified your Board on May 28, 2010, of its intent to negotiate a sole source agreement with SCADP, the only agency capable of providing residential mental health supportive services to hearing impaired individuals within the Los Angeles County. SCADP has extensive experience in providing supportive housing programs that include fully trained ASL staff, substance abuse services and mental health treatment for persons with hearing impairments.

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