



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Inter-Departmental Correspondence**

**Health Services Agency**

**DATE:** May 29, 2002

**BOARD MEETING DATE:** June 18, 2002

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Margaret Taylor, Director of Health Services  
Gale Bataille, Director of Mental Health *M.T.*  
*Gale Bataille*

**SUBJECT:** San Mateo County Mental Health Strategic Plan Report

**Recommendation**

Accept a report on the Mental Health Services Division Strategic Plan.

**Background**

The San Mateo County Mental Health Services Division recently completed a strategic planning process in order to confirm the vision and mission of the organization and identify goals and objectives for the next four years. The planning process included county Mental Health and other public agency staff, providers, and consumers. The resulting Strategic Plan addresses both areas needing improvement and those requiring innovation. San Mateo's current mental health system has received state and national recognition for its creativity, high quality service, and early intervention initiatives. By making a commitment to the Strategic Plan, the Division will respond more effectively to critical environmental demands, and continue to improve the quality and effectiveness of services, as well as the accountability of all providers in the service system.

**Discussion**

The Strategic Plan encompasses a broad range of activities that will enable the Mental Health Services Division to address the following requirements:

- 1) In a time of economic uncertainty, Mental Health Division services must become more cost-effective and less reliant on county general fund support. The Division plans to: a) develop clear policies regarding who will be served in the mental health system, criteria for what services they will receive, and clear clinical admission and discharge policies, to ensure that

available resources are prioritized to serve populations most in need of the public mental health system; and b) improve business capabilities to maximize revenue collections while maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements.

- 2) Timely, appropriate mental health treatment improves client functioning and reduces unnecessary use of costly acute services. In recent years, mental health professionals and researchers have made substantial progress in identifying which treatments are most effective in ameliorating particular mental health problems. However, mental health organizations have not systematically incorporated these “evidence based” practices into their systems of care. For example, an integrated mental health and substance abuse treatment approach is most effective for treating individuals with co-occurring psychiatric, drug, and alcohol problems. Mental Health Services Division consumers and providers will participate in a continuing focus on identifying and incorporating “evidence based” practices in the service system in order to achieve optimal client outcomes.

The Division’s Strategic Plan identifies the need to begin organizing treatment through a structured process that authorizes clients (based on clinical/functional assessment) for a level of care. The goal of this level of care assignment process is to assure the provision of the right intensity and amount of care for each client and to enable the Division to align demand and service capacity. Treatment planning will continue to recognize that there is a dynamic relationship between professional expertise and consumer guided services—both are essential to the process of recovery from mental illness.

- 3) The Division operates its program as a field test of mental health managed care for California through a unique 1915 (b) waiver agreement with the state and federal governments. Implementation of the Strategic Plan will assure that the Division has a strong basis for renegotiation and continuation of the waiver in the fall of FY 03-04.

### **Vision Alignment**

The Strategic Plan supports the commitment to ensure basic health and safety for all including helping vulnerable people achieve a better quality of life and responsive, effective and collaborative government. In addition, the Strategic Plan prioritizes expanding housing resources for the mentally ill in partnership with the Human Services Agency (HSA); developing a plan for integrated services to clients with co-occurring psychiatric and drug and alcohol problems in conjunction with the Alcohol and Drug Services of HSA and strengthening collaboration with system partners including Hospital and Clinics, the Human Services Agency, the Sheriff’s Department, Probation, and Education.

### **Fiscal Impact**

The Strategic Plan does not rely on additional net County dollars to succeed. The Mental Health Division’s recommended FY 02-03 budget assumes increased revenue as a result of some of the Strategic Plan goals and objectives initiated in FY 02-03 related to improving business practices. The Strategic Plan calls for updating or replacing the antiquated Mental Health information and billing system so that it meets state and federal requirements after FY 02-03. Such an investment in 12 to 18 months would be funded through expenditure savings and potentially, one time only use of the reserve.