



Communications Report September 2008

Staffing

August was a challenging month for the Communications Unit of the MHSOAC. We temporarily lost three of our five member group due to the budget impasse: Cynthia Craft, Gia Vang, and Christina Call. By the time you read this, we hope that these valued team members will have returned to work.

Due to our staff reduction, we have postponed our newsletter. However, we are moving forward on other projects.

Website

We have completed most of the content for the website and we aim to be ready to pass this content on to the website contractor for implementation as soon as the budget passes and the contractor resumes work.

Letter to the Editor

We prepared an MHSOAC response to Rose King's Sacramento Bee letter to the editor. The Bee did not print our letter due to the editor's choice to print Steve Mayberg's response. The Bee apparently thought Dr. Mayberg's letter was a sufficient opposing viewpoint.

Budget Update

We sent you a state budget update when the Governor proposed borrowing some of the Mental Health Services Fund to cover some of the General Fund budget deficit. We continue to monitor budget proposals for their impact on the MHSA.

Remembrance Day

The Communications Unit is working to support the Sixth Annual Remembrance Day on September 15th. Remembrance Day is one of the results of legislation carried by Commissioner Wes Chesbro and honors those who lived and died in state hospitals, institutions and developmental centers in California. Ceremonies and celebrations are being held to ensure that those buried in unmarked and mass graves are not forgotten. We plan on doing a press release about this event. Let us know if you would like more information.

Law Enforcement Outreach

We are working with Sheriff Kolender's office on MHSA outreach activities to California law enforcement. We have been providing materials about the MHSA to the Sheriff's office and we have been consulting on a survey of California law enforcement regarding knowledge of the MHSA.

New Equipment

After many months of pursuing some communications equipment, we have successfully obtained a still camera and a video camera. We plan to use this equipment to modernize our communications efforts in the coming months, including putting a video on our website. This video will welcome the public to the website and will introduce them to the Commission.

New Consumer Artwork at MHSOAC

We have been preparing a press release for the presentation to the Commission of the painting, "Happiness". We hope to present this work at the November 2008 MHSOAC meeting. This artwork was painted by a Sacramento consumer group; the group gave the painting to the Commission for display at the MHSOAC office.

Other Duties

Matt continues to staff the Co-occurring Disorders Workgroup and Yee continues to assist Beverly with Commission meeting projects. Yee also has been maintaining the current website and has been responding to the MHSOAC account email.

That wraps up our Communications Report. Thank you for your patience as we work to meet the communications needs of the Commission during this period of staff shortage.

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