



### ABOUT THE OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL SERVICES

#### History and Purpose

The California Department of Mental Health (DMH) Office of Multicultural Services (OMS), established in 1998, provides leadership direction to DMH for promoting and establishing culturally and linguistically competent mental health services within the public mental health system through actions targeted both within and external to DMH. The OMS works with community partners to eliminate racial, ethnic, cultural and language disparities in access and quality of care within mental health programs and services.

With the support of the DMH Director, OMS coordinates efforts to reduce disparities in access and quality of care for California racial ethnic cultural communities. OMS works to foster change in policy, language, clinical practice, research, and intervention practices.

#### Mission

The OMS mission is to strengthen the DMH's focus and ability to provide culturally and linguistically competent mental health services to the diverse population of California.

#### Core Principles

- Diversity and culture is a strength
- Honor beliefs, traditional healing, values, religions, and spirituality of evolving cultures
- Cultural competence is supported at all levels of the Department – director, executive staff, and line staff and across all divisions & programs
- Ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate policy and services
- Change the way services are provided to benefit the needs of all people
- Invest in the transformation of the public mental health system from the medical

model to a culturally competent recovery oriented model

- Focus on strengths, resiliency, recovery, and permanency
- Client/Community defines appropriateness of services
- Address stigma and discrimination and institutional/structural racism
- Keep an open mind
- Actively engaging multicultural community participation in all elements of mental health policy development and service delivery
- Commitment to knowledge/awareness of cultural groups (how they differ from dominant, from one another, other groups)
- Safe environment for open/honest discussions
- Recognize the impacts of class, gender, race, sexual orientation, homelessness, immigration/refugee status, socio-economic status, poverty, disabilities, age, and all other defining characteristics
- Build capacity (resources, research, workforce, infrastructure)
- Fairness and equity in resources for all populations
- Consistency in data collection that supports actual measurement of disparities and progress made to address disparities
- Values are multilayered – top/bottom/sideways/diagonal/circular

#### Areas of Responsibility

##### • Cultural Competency

The OMS is responsible for ensuring that cultural competence is embedded into all facets of the department. Foster the understanding of society as a “mosaic” rather than a “melting pot”, thereby honoring and celebrating the diversity within California.

- **Community Engagement**

The OMS makes every effort to dialogue with community partners, community leaders, and community members. The OMS is committed to supporting the growth of “Community Defined Evidence” through which new strategies, approaches, and interventions defined by individual communities can be identified and supported to achieve a higher level of evidence.

Community Defined Evidence is defined as a set of practices that communities have used and determined to yield positive results as determined by community consensus over time and which may or may not have been measured empirically but have reached a level of acceptance by the community (Ken Martinez, Psy.D., El Boletin, Fall/Winter 2008, p.9).

- **Cultural Competence Plans**

In 1998, California was the first state to require all counties to develop cultural competence plans as a tool to assess disparities and identify strategies for addressing those disparities.

The OMS is responsible for developing and implementing the Cultural Competence Plan Requirements (CCPR). The CCPR requires counties to identify, analyze, and report disparities in mental health services for unserved and underserved communities and to develop strategies to address these disparities. The OMS reviews each plan and provides feedback to county mental health departments.

- **Committee Involvement**

The OMS partners with numerous organizations and committees, including, but not limited to: California Mental Health Director’s Association’s Cultural Competence/Ethnic Service Managers Committee; Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission’s Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee; Cultural Competence Advisory Committee; Cultural Brokers; Women’s Mental Health Policy Council; California Institute for Mental Health Center for

Multicultural Development; and the State Interagency Team Workgroup to Eliminate Disparities.

- **MHSA Plan Reviews**

The 2004 passage of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) was a major new investment in mental health system. The OMS took an active role, in partnership with the Cultural Competence Advisory Committee, to integrate and embed cultural and linguistic competence requirements into each of the five major components of the MHSA to address disparities and respond to the needs of California’s diverse communities.

The OMS reviews county MHSA plans for Community Services and Supports, Workforce Education and Training, Housing, Innovation and Prevention and Early Intervention.

- **Training and Curriculum Development**

The Chief of the OMS has extensive experience as a keynote speaker providing cultural competence training at state and national level conferences and policy forums. In addition, the OMS coordinates and provides training for DMH Headquarters staff in the area of cultural competence.

The OMS recently engaged contractors to design and develop comprehensive cultural competence training curricula including: CA Brief Multicultural Competence and Mental Health Interpreter Training. For more information about these training programs, please visit the OMS web site: [http://www.dmh.ca.gov/Multicultural\\_Services/default.asp](http://www.dmh.ca.gov/Multicultural_Services/default.asp)

## Contact Information

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