



C A L I F O R N I A   D E P A R T M E N T   O F

# Mental Health

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March 23, 2004

TO: LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

**SUBJECT: ROLL-OUT OF PERFORMANCE OUTCOME TECHNOLOGY OPTIONS  
IN LIEU OF SPRING 2004 CONSUMER PERCEPTION SURVEY DATA COLLECTION**

It is the goal of DMH to minimize burden on counties with respect to performance outcome reporting, especially considering the current budget climate. The Performance Outcomes and Quality Improvement unit at DMH, which is responsible for the Consumer Perception Survey Data collection, has also experienced a reduction in staff and will no longer be able to offer counties the option of sending in paper survey forms for DMH processing – as was done for the November 2003 data collection period. (Over 50,000 surveys were processed centrally at DMH from the last survey period!) Raw data from the November 2003 survey period will be available to counties through the Information Technology Web Services (ITWS) within the next three weeks.

Due to the aforementioned budget and staff reduction issues, the upcoming Spring and Summer months will be used to prepare for a smooth data collection period in the Fall 2004. Therefore, in lieu of the April/May data collection, DMH will roll out and test its new technology options for Consumer Perception Survey data input:

- 1) web-based, on-line direct data entry (no cost technology option)
- 2) web-based scanning and verification system (low cost-to-county technology option)

These technologies have been developed in order to minimize non-uniformity and performance outcome reporting errors. DMH would like to offer counties the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new technologies without having to respond to actual data collection demands. DMH is working with CMHDA to explore options for funding to help offset the initial hardware/software costs to counties.

The following are scheduled to take place beginning April/May 2004:

- DMH demonstrations of the system to counties (locations and dates to be determined).

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- County selection and procurement of necessary equipment for implementation of technology configurations suitable for their needs.
- DMH comprehensive trainings for counties.
- County user identification and password distribution in order to provide secure (HIPAA compliant) system access to county users for statewide system test and Fall 2004 data collection period.
- Test of the capacity of the new system, that is, determine how many counties can simultaneously use the system - so that during the real data collection/entry period efficient scheduling of system usage may be accomplished, if necessary.

DMH is pleased to offer counties these data entry options in addition to the Information Technology Web Services (ITWS) data file upload procedure, which has been offered previously. Positive aspects of the new data entry options include (1) minimization of data errors, (2) quick, centralized data entry and faster availability of data for analyses and examination by interested stakeholders (as the data entry workload will be distributed across counties and entered into the DMH database in "real time"), and (3) flexibility with regard to changes in survey forms and accountability indicators.

Because of these benefits, DMH is encouraging all counties to consider using the new, no/low cost technology options instead of, or in addition to the ITWS data file upload option. Detailed information regarding the technology implementation will be distributed shortly. In the interim, should you have questions about any of the issues addressed in this letter, please contact Stephanie Oprendeck, Ph.D., Chief, Performance Outcomes and Quality Improvement, at (916) 653-3517 or [soprende@dmhhq.state.ca.us](mailto:soprende@dmhhq.state.ca.us).

Sincerely,



CAROL HOOD  
Deputy Director  
Systems of Care

Cc. Members, California Mental Health Planning Council  
Members, State Quality Improvement Council  
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