

The California Community Colleges (CCC), Chancellor's Office was allocated MHPA funds to assist the CCC to meet the increased mental health needs of its students. These are critical needs, which are growing rapidly and present significant life and safety issues to individual students and the colleges. Research, which is strongly supported by information from the colleges, indicates that serious mental health problems are increasing for college students nationwide, including those attending the CCC. Student suicide rates have risen dramatically, and threatening and violent behavior is of increasing concern after campus incidents, such as the one at Virginia Technical University. Currently, campus health services, Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS), counseling, police and safety, other student service programs and faculty need support in addressing these increased needs.

CCC activities reported to DMH for the period 1/1/09 – 6/30/09 are as follows:

1. Program Information

- a. Brief summary of the major activities performed during FY 2009

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to address issues related to California Community College students began July 1, 2008. Thus, the 2008-09 FY was the first year of our shared work.

The major activities undertaken include:

Attendance at various DMH interagency partner meetings by Scott Berenson, Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) Coordinator and other DSPS staff.

Establishment of working relationships and expectations for shared work between DMH and the CCCCCO to support systems change in the provision of mental health services and resources to meet the diverse needs of California Community College (CCC) students with mental health issues.

Recruitment for the Mental Health Specialist position at the CCCCCO. This activity faced several challenges including the need to re-advertise the position to get a pool of well-qualified applicants and the selection and appointment of Abygail Medina, who accomplished good work but returned to her former department for a promotion after two months in the position. The recruitment for this position was re-advertised and an offer has since been extended to and accepted by Betsy Sheldon. In the interim, Scott Berenson and Catherine Campisi have re-directed small portions of their time to address some of the most critical needs. We anxiously await the arrival of Ms. Sheldon who begins at the CCCCCO July 31, 2009.

The Dean of Student Services and the Mental Health Specialist attended the Health Services Association of the California Community College (HSACCC) conference on March 6 in Riverside on the day of the conference that focused on mental health issues. They met with leadership of the organization to discuss shared concerns and issues. See Attachment 1.

In addition, the CCCCCO has worked closely with the HSACCC, specifically Becky Perelli, in-coming President, to carry out the following actions to support the mental health needs of CCC students:

Provided responses to inquiries of college staff on the status of the SMHI and other MHSOAC initiatives relevant to higher education.

Provided the Executive Summary of the California Strategic Plan on Suicide Prevention to community college Health Services personnel in March 2009, along with the notice of the "Launching the California Strategic Plan on Suicide Prevention into Action" Pre-Conference Workshop of the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) Annual Conference held in San Francisco on April 14, 2009.

Encouraged such college personnel to attend the pre-conference.

Provided CCC representation on the Task Force to develop the California Mental Health Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Advisory Committee.

- b. Identify 2 or 3 activities or accomplishments that are considered highlights and help further the intent of the MHSA (e.g., achieving system change)

Through the use of the MHSA funds provided to the CCCCCO, it was able to accomplish the following in support of systems change:

The CCCCCO established a link on its webpage under the "Student Support" tab, which provides a significant amount of information to college staff, students, families, and the general public. New resources are added to the site and it is updated regularly. This allows for a no cost, easily accessible repository of information on mental health resources of greatest relevance for college students.

The CCCCCO established its system wide Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services and held its first meeting in June, 2009. The Committee consists of a wide variety of stakeholders, both internal and external to the system. The meeting was very productive and quarterly meetings are planned for 2009-10.

In collaboration with Gail Conrad, District Coordinator for Disabled Students Programs and Services at the San Diego Community College District and a doctoral student in Community College Leadership at San Diego State University, the CCCCO disseminated a statewide survey for CCC staff who have a role serving students with mental health issues. The purpose of the survey is to gather baseline data on how mental health needs of CCC students are currently being met. The survey was based on the National Survey for Counseling Center Directors, a survey that has been completed by the University of Pittsburgh, School of Education for over 25 years under the direction of Dr. Robert Gallagher. Many of the topics in the survey were similar to the issues in California, but community colleges have never been surveyed using this instrument. Currently, we are awaiting data analysis by Ms. Conrad, who provided an update on the survey to the Advisory Committee.

c. Identify activities being coordinated with the local mental health system

The Contact List of MHSA County Coordinators was disseminated to CCC health services personnel based on encouragement by the CCCCO and DMH to develop partnerships as each county develops their respective Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) plans.

The CCCCO provided updates on the SMHI and encouraged colleges to become involved with their local MHSA planning process at its statewide Regional Coordinator meetings for Directors of Disabled Students' Programs and Services (DSPS).