



**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & RECOVERY SERVICES**

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: Philosophical Principles/Goals of
Mendocino County Mental Health Plan

APPLICABLE PROGRAM: Mendocino County Mental Health
Managed Care Plan

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Signature: *Tom Pinizzotto*

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BASIC PHILOSOPHY:

The following statement of philosophical principles and goals for the Mental Health Plan shall provide for overall direction for the Plan in the provision of services and be the guideline for development of more specific policies and procedures.

STATEMENT:

The Mendocino County Mental Health Plan serves the people of Mendocino County whose lives are affected by mental illness. The Plan strives to deliver services in a respectful, responsive and efficient manner and with sensitivity to cultural diversity. It is our goal to educate ourselves, individuals, families and the community about mental illness and the hopeful possibilities of treatment and recovery. Those we serve are supported in their efforts to maximize independent living and to improve quality of life through community-based treatment. In collaboration with other agencies, we seek to maximize the resources available and attend to concerns for the safety of individuals and the community. We will strive to manage our fiscal resources effectively and

responsibly while insuring that productivity and efficiency are important organizational values which result in maximum benefits for all concerned.

As a community Mental Health delivery system, sanctioned under the Community Mental Health Services Act, Division 5, Welfare and Institutions Code, State of California, the Mendocino County Mental Health Plan is committed to the development of a culturally competent, comprehensive and coordinated single system of care with a wide range of services, available and accessible to all residents of the county.

Limited resources and, to no small extent, State policies require prioritization of services to diverse, needful populations. To that end, the Department shall invest its direct services resources to those individuals in acute need, whether it be for those who have developed normative role functioning and are in need of crisis resolution or short-term outpatient treatment, or for those labeled chronically or severely mentally ill and in need due to a prevailing, disabling mental disorder. The goal of treatment shall be to assist people in developing their own mechanisms for dealing with stress and facilitating independent ways of dealing with problems.

The means by which this goal is to be realized (objectives) include:

1. Intensive short-term intervention during periods of individual crisis, including assessment and evaluation of comprehensive needs.
2. Intervention that includes direct utilization of the client's existing support system (family, significant others, support programs), in recognition that individual change includes change in the total support system.
3. Recognition that Mental Health professionals do not constitute the only helping resources for individuals experiencing distress and to assist in development of community-based resources, including a commitment to self-help approaches, and actively promoting the development of support systems to meet the variety of human needs.
4. High priority is given to direct and indirect services when alternatives are not available, adequate, or accessible in the private sector, especially to high risk groups and underserved populations.

5. Manifestation of the concept of treatment in the least restrictive setting and condition by actively promoting voluntary treatment over involuntary treatment. Treatment plans will have, as a goal of treatment, movement toward voluntary treatment and lower level of care.
6. To continue to increase cultural sensitivity to the County, in order to provide therapeutic interventions that are culturally appropriate and relevant to the consumer, by providing ongoing training to the Mental Health Plan Providers and the systematic implementation of the Cultural Competency Plan.
7. Expanding the use of community education and consultation services as a means to:
 - a. Address specific needs of clients being served by the Department that may not be related to their mental illness.
 - b. Reduce the stigmatization of individuals labeled mentally ill.

A number of service delivery concepts exist that directly relate to the goal and objectives outlined above. They include:

1. Decentralization of Services, or the maximization of availability and accessibility of services by locating them as proximate to the consumers of the service as is feasible.
2. De-institutionalization, meaning quality care in the least restrictive, least institutional setting as possible (i.e., "normalization").
3. Continuum of Care, or a full range of varied services (direct, indirect, public/private) allowing an appropriate intervention response relative to the extent and degree of individual impairment demonstrated.
4. Continuity of Care, or the systematized means to promote linkages between elements of a system to avoid individuals "falling through the cracks."
5. Networking, or maximizing the services from the many caregivers in the community, both in health or human service agencies or in the private sector, the goal is to achieve an active collaboration and avoid duplication of efforts.

6. Cost Effectiveness, or the provision of services through the most effective use of public funds and in a manner consistent with quality care. Such may be accomplished through an increase in contracting for services from community-based providers.

The Mendocino County Mental Health Plan remains committed to serve clients in ways that enhance their ability to control their own lives with optimal self-sufficiency and self-determination. Clients will continue to be encouraged to participate in planning their treatment to the maximum extent possible. The rights of all clients will actively be protected, advocated for, and insured.

Efforts shall be ongoing to develop community understanding of mental illness and in order to promote the health of the community as a whole. Emotional problems and mental illness are the results of stresses coming from the emotional/psychological, physical, and social aspects of people's lives. Mental health needs cannot be met nor problems solved by addressing only one of these aspects. Instead, a system approach is required which is directed toward the individual's interaction with his/her total environment.

Citizen participation in planning, evaluation and delivery of all services will be achieved by statute through the activities of the Mental Health Board, and encouraged on the part of the community as a whole. The department welcomes constructive feedback and encourages mutual problem solving.

The Mendocino County Mental Health Plan, as sanctioned by legislation and State Department of Health Care Services policies and regulations, shall be in conformity to the law and regulation. Every effort will be maintained to lessen negative impact on consumers if and when regulation is restrictive, such as certain cost containment measures. Similarly, as new services are developed, decisions as to resource allocation will be based upon a public planning process and prioritization to local need identification and conformity to State guidelines.