COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

MARVIN J. SOUTHARD, D.S.W.
Director

SUSAN KERR
Chief Deputy Director

RODERICK SHANER, M.D.
Medical Director

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
GLORIA MOLINA
YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
DON KNABE
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

http://dmh.co.la.ca.us

550 SOUTH VERMONT AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90020

Reply To: (213) 738-4601
FAX No.: (213) 386-1297

March 18, 2004

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

IMPLEMENTATION OF ENHANCED CLINICAL SUPERVISION FOR MENTAL HEALTH PSYCHIATRISTS (ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Approve interim ordinance authority for 12 additional Supervising Mental Health Psychiatrist positions pursuant to Section 6.06.020 of the County Code and the deletion of 12 Mental Health Psychiatrist positions, subject to allocation by the Department of Human Resources (DHR), effective upon Board adoption, in order to enhance supervision of Mental Health Psychiatrists throughout the County of Los Angeles. The proposed organizational structure is shown in the Attachment. The additional cost is $42,734, which is a three-month proration, for the remainder of Fiscal Year (FY) 2003-2004, and the annualized cost is $183,598 for FY 2004-2005. Funding for FY 2003-2004 will be absorbed within the current Adopted Budget.

2. Authorize the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to hire on the 12 additional Supervising Mental Health Psychiatrist positions.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Closer clinical supervision of psychiatrists and other mental health professionals is necessitated by the increasing size and complexity of clinics in DMH. Most DMH clients are seriously mentally ill and present with increasing medical and substance abuse problems. Successful treatment requires the careful prescribing and managing of increasingly complex medications that can have serious potential untoward effects.

Additionally, DMH's standards and guidelines require increased monitoring of ongoing clinical practice to ensure appropriate care and liability mitigation.

DMH currently has 175 budgeted FTE Mental Health Psychiatrist positions and 11 Supervising Mental Health Psychiatrist positions. DMH's current Supervising Mental Health Psychiatrists have broad programmatic and administrative responsibilities that preclude provision of ongoing clinical supervision within specific clinics. Furthermore, peer supervision is prohibited by Civil Service regulations.

Exchanging 12 Mental Health Psychiatrist positions for Supervising Mental Health Psychiatrist positions will enable DMH to implement a supervisory infrastructure that consists of 23 Supervising Mental Health Psychiatrists to oversee the work of the remaining 163 Mental Health Psychiatrists. The additional supervisory positions will ensure that psychiatrists and other clinicians providing direct care to large numbers of seriously mentally ill individuals in outpatient clinic sites receive essential clinical supervision and direction.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended Board actions are consistent with the County's Organizational Goal 2, Workforce Excellence, and Programmatic Goal 7, Health and Mental Health, within the Countywide Strategic Plan. Board approval will enhance quality to ensure workforce and service delivery excellence.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

There will be no increase in net County cost. The estimated cost of enhanced clinical supervision of Mental Health Psychiatrists is $42,734, which is a three-month proration, for the remainder of FY 2003-2004, with an annual cost of $183,598 for FY 2004-2005. For FY 2003-2004, the funding for the slight increased cost will be absorbed within the existing Salaries and Employee Benefits appropriation. Funding for FY 2004-2005 will be requested in the final changes portion of the budget process.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

DMH will implement this action in such a way that no current employee's position will be adversely affected by this restructuring. Individuals who have demonstrated outstanding clinical, supervisory, and leadership skills requisite for these supervisory level positions will be chosen from certification lists when the examinations are promulgated.

The additional supervisory psychiatrist positions will implement an essential supervisory infrastructure for closer clinical supervision of psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. Supervising Mental Health Psychiatrists based in large clinics throughout the County will provide psychiatric treatment, clinical supervision, and will have clinic-level responsibility for coordinating and monitoring the quality of psychiatric and medical services provided. A maximum of 30 percent of their time will be devoted to duties other than direct client care.

DMH consulted with the Chief Administrative Office/Employee Relations (CAO/ER) and DHR and met with the Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD). CAO/ER, DHR, and UAPD have indicated that they concur with DMH's proposed plan.

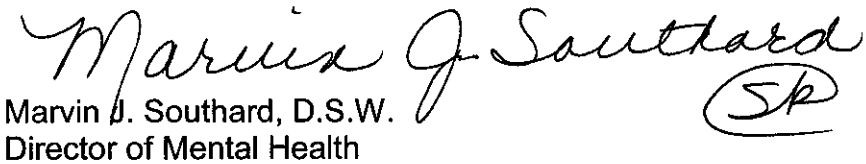
IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

With the increasing numbers of clients served, mental health professionals involved in direct service, and the increased complexity of client care, DMH deems it essential to augment its monitoring of clinical care. Increased clinical supervision will improve the quality of treatment by assuring proper adherence to County procedures, policies, and best practices. Consequently, clients who receive the best quality services are most likely to have better outcomes and fewer adverse incidents. Furthermore, DMH will gain a valuable tool in its efforts to mitigate potential liability.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Mental Health will need one (1) copy of the adopted Board's action. It is requested that the Executive Officer of the Board notifies the Department of Mental Health's Contracts Development and Administration Division at (213) 738-4684, when this document is available.

Respectfully submitted,



Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.
Director of Mental Health

MJS:RS:SK:RK

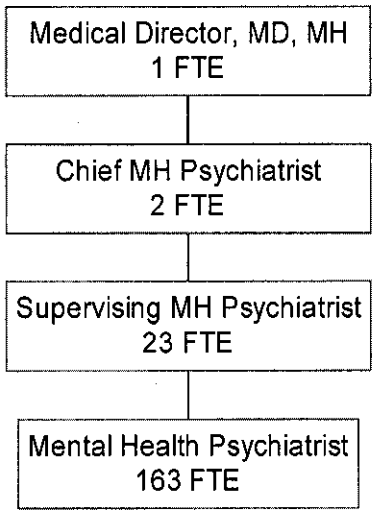
Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Susan Toy Stern, Department of Human Resources
Chairperson, Mental Health Commission

ATTACHMENT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES - DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Psychiatrist Supervisory Infrastructure
Proposed Organizational Chart
Fiscal Year 2003-2004



Rev. 03-10-04