COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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February 02, 2010

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:

APPROVE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FOURTH ANNUAL CONNECTIONS FOR LIFE THROUGH EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION CONFERENCE (ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)

SUBJECT

Request approval to host and conduct the Fourth Annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference at the California Endowment Center for Health Communities.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Authorize the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to expend funds to conduct the Fourth Annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference to be held on April 7, 2010, at an estimated total cost of $7,300, fully funded by Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Training funds.

2. Authorize DMH to purchase food and beverages as an exception to the Los Angeles County Code Section 5.40.097, Incidental Expenses, which limits such purchases to $500 per occurrence and $5,000 annually, for County employees and consumers attending the conference.

3. Authorize DMH to execute an agreement with the California Endowment Center for Healthy Communities (Endowment) for the conference's catering services at a total estimated cost of $4,800.

4. Authorize DMH to execute an agreement with the California Certified Interpreters for the conference's interpretation services at a total estimated cost of $1,800.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

These actions will permit DMH to host and conduct the Fourth Annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference to be held on April 7, 2010 at the Endowment. In support of promoting the wellness and recovery of mental health clients in Los Angeles County, the conference will offer consumers the information and community resources that support their journey to independence and self-determination. This conference also includes an award ceremony to recognize the successes consumers have achieved in attaining their employment and/or education goals, as well as monolingual Spanish-speaking interpreters that are required at the conference to translate for the monolingual consumers in attendance.

The conference is required at this time because it will support DMH in accomplishing elements of its State-approved MHSA plans. A major mandate of the MHSA is to reach the unserved and underserved populations to support their recovery from mental illness. This conference provides an important opportunity to support the tenet of transformation by offering a learning opportunity to consumers who are reticent to work or attend school because of their mental illness.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended actions are consistent with County Strategic Plan Goal 4, Health and Mental Health.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The estimated total cost of the conference is $7,300, fully funded by MHSA Training funds and is included in the Department's FY 2009-10 Final Adopted Budget. The amount covers $4,800 for breakfast and lunch catering services, $1800 for two Spanish interpreters, and $700 for presenters' honorariums, and supplies including paper, poster board, labels, folders, pens and name badges.

There is no net County cost.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Since 2007, DMH and the Mental Health Commission have sponsored an annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference. This conference unites consumers who are employed, volunteering and/or attending school, consumers whose recovery goals include employment and/or education and others who work in the employment and education field. This conference supports the tenet of transformation contained in the MHSA.

Connections for Life Through Employment and Education is a truly transformative conference that offers a learning opportunity for consumers who are reticent to work or attend school because of

their mental illness. Many of the consumers who attend the conference were gainfully employed or enrolled in school prior to being diagnosed with a chronic and persistent mental illness. These consumers will learn about the successes other consumers have achieved in attaining their employment and/or education goals. Consumers will acquire a more fundamental understanding of the "no wrong door" approach to obtaining employment. Consumers will gain a heightened awareness of their employment and/or educational capabilities.

Connections for Life Through Employment and Education also provides valuable community resources to consumers that are needed to support their interest in employment and education. The community resource providers available to consumers at this conference include Los Angeles Unified School District, State of California Department of Rehabilitation, Self Help and Recovery Exchange (SHARE), In Home Supportive Services, WorkSource Centers, Social Security Administration, County Client Coalition and National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

This conference will offer consumers the information and community resources that support their journey to independence and self-determination. Consumers will join in a dialogue of strength, recovery and wellness. This unique opportunity will reinforce the power of hope and positive thinking and provide an environment that envisions solutions to the many challenges of having a mental illness. This conference also includes an award ceremony to recognize the successes consumers have achieved in attaining their employment and/or education goals.

This is an all day conference with about 200 DMH consumers attending. Catering services are needed because many of the consumers attending the conference do not have the financial resources to pay for breakfast and lunch and/or lack the transportation resources to access a restaurant and have breakfast and lunch within the allocated break times. Serving breakfast and lunch at the conference also provides consumers with the opportunity to network and share personal resources.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

This conference is being held at the Endowment which was selected based on availability, no cost for the space, size of accommodations and ease of both auto and public transportation for presenters, employees and consumers. The Endowment prohibits the use of outside catering services and contracts with Sodexo for their catering services.

DMH solicited bid proposals to provide Spanish translation at the conference from five (5) local Spanish interpreters on the Department's vendor list, eliciting two (2) vendor responses. California Certified Interpreters submitted the lowest bid proposal.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

This conference will benefit the mental health system by promoting wellness and recovery. Consumers will be provided with information and community resources that support their entering the workforce and/or enrolling in a vocational or school program. Ultimately, this conference increases the likelihood of consumers being gainfully employed and no longer reliant on publicly funded services. Moreover, approval of this action will not impact any other services.

Respectfully submitted,

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

MJS:MF:LR

c: Chief Executive Officer
Acting County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller