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February 16, 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 SECOND CALIFORNIA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY CONFERENCE (ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)

SUBJECT

Request approval to host and conduct the Second Annual California Mental Health Advocacy Conference at the Wilshire Grand Los Angeles Hotel, including space, catering, and other necessary arrangements. The conference will host workshops to benefit the mental health system, reduce mental illness stigma, and promote wellness and recovery of mental health clients, their families and multiple Los Angeles County communities.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Authorize the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to expend funds to conduct the Second Annual California Mental Health Advocacy Conference to be held on April 15 and 16, 2010, at an estimated cost of $86,000, fully funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Prevention and Early Intervention Early Start Stigma and Discrimination Project.

2. Authorize the Director of Mental Health, or his designee, to execute an agreement with the Wilshire Grand for space and catering services for the Conference at an estimated total cost of $61,000.

3. Authorize DMH to purchase food and beverages for County employees and consumers attending the Conference as an exception to Section 5.40.097, Incidental Expenses, of the Los Angeles

County Code, which limits such purchases to $500 per occurrence and $5,000 annually.

4. Authorize DMH to award approximately 200 scholarships to support consumers, community members, and family members who are unable to pay the $200 registration fee. This total estimated value of $40,000 for scholarships is not included in the conference total cost.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

These actions will permit DMH to host and conduct the Second Annual California Mental Health Advocacy Conference to be held on April 15 and 16, 2010 at the Wilshire Grand. In support of the mental health system in Los Angeles County, the Conference will host approximately 10 workshops that are aligned with the County's Strategic Plan's goals and strategies. Conference participants, to include community members and outside agencies, will receive information regarding leading-edge research and tools that combat stigma and discrimination, and promote dignity, social inclusion, and effective individual systems advocacy at the individual and institutional levels.

The conference is required at this time because it will support DMH in meeting the requirements 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 focuses on providing the education and training to advocates with essential tools and strategies for advocacy awareness that will assist in providing insight, feedback, and direction from the community, stakeholders, and leadership in what advocacy needs are unmet and most urgent. This conference also includes an award ceremony to recognize individuals for their outstanding work in legislative, systems, and individual advocacy.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended actions support the County's Strategic Plan Goal 2, Children, Family and Adult Well-Being, and Goal 4, Health and Mental Health.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The estimated total cost of the two-day Conference is $86,000. The final cost will be determined by the actual number of attendees, which is expected to be up to 450 people. The budget for this conference includes $61,000 for hotel conference room, food, beverage, and audio-visual services, $8,000 for honorariums, transportation and room accommodation fees for presenters, exhibitors, and select individuals participating in the Conference, $6,000 for gift bags and giveaways to attendees, $6,000 for program brochures and booklets, $2,500 for presentations and awards, and $2,300 for displays and supplies.

DMH will provide approximately 200 scholarships to support community members, consumers, and family members who are unable to pay registration. The total value of the scholarships is $40,000, separate from the $86,000 conference budget. In addition, DMH will be covering approximately 75 percent of registration fees for up to 100 County employees to attend the event, as a standard practice by DMH for all conferences.

Conference expenses will be paid for by MHSA funding from the Prevention and Early Intervention Early Start Stigma and Discrimination Project. There is no impact to net County cost. Sufficient appropriation exists within the Department's Fiscal Year 2009-10, Final Budget, to fund the estimated costs of the conference.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

In April 2008, DMH conducted the First Annual California Mental Health Advocacy Conference that united advocates, providers, family members, clinicians, parents, and consumers in a unique forum designed to generate discussion regarding change strategy and skills development, and provided the opportunity to attendees to hear from State and national leaders on modifying mental health systems to empower diverse and underserved communities. This two-day conference will not only continue to serve as a learning forum for Los Angeles County mental health consumers, their family members and program staff, but it will also be used to emphasize the MHSA as a venue for transformation in fostering better services for all communities.

Day One of the Conference will focus primarily on stigma/discrimination and macro-level advocacy with an emphasis on systems' change. Roundtable discussions will be held to identify systematic issues and community needs. An award ceremony will recognize individuals for their outstanding work in legislative, systems, and individual advocacy.

Day Two will focus on more specific topics on stigma/discrimination, with expert panel discussions and skills' training. Information gathered through the conference will be used to target, develop and refine County-wide training efforts in line with the MHSA Workforce Development, Education and Training Plan.

Committee representatives will be utilizing hotel rooms the night before the conferences to ensure on-site logistical coordination of exhibit booths, signage, and conference materials. DMH will enter into agreements with the Conference site following Board approval. A deposit of $2,500 will be made to ensure the reservation of hotel space within two weeks of signing the contract.

Board approval of the recommended actions will enable the Director of Mental Health to execute an agreement with the Wilshire Grand for catering services and provide DMH with the necessary authority to expend funds in support of this Conference.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

This conference is being held at the Wilshire Grand Los Angeles Hotel. The Wilshire Grand was chosen after reviewing the availability and prices of various facilities located in the Los Angeles area. The Wilshire Grand Los Angeles Hotel was selected based on availability, competitive price, size of accommodations and ease of both private and public transportation for presenters, employees and consumers.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The conference will benefit Los Angeles communities and the mental health system by empowering

families and consumers, reducing stigma and promoting wellness and recovery.

Respectfully submitted,

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

MJS:EV:MN

c: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Chairperson, Mental Health Commission