



DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

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30 DAY PUBLIC POSTING MID-YEAR ADJUSTMENT TO THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (MHSA) ANNUAL UPDATE FISCAL YEAR 2019-20

QUALITY, OUTCOMES AND TRAINING DIVISION PLAN TO SUSPEND MHSA WET PROJECT: THE STIPEND PROGRAM

JULY 15, 2020

INTENDED ACTION

The Department intends to suspend the MHSA WET Stipend Program for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The \$3,063,600 project is funded with MHSA WET funds and is part of the Department's WET plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors in June, 2019 as part of the Department's MHSA Annual Update Fiscal Year 2019-2020.

MHSA WET STIPEND PROGRAM PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Stipend program is to create a pipeline of students who are preparing to graduate in the following fields: Masters of Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, Nurse Practitioners and psychology students to enter the public mental health workforce. Approved applicants have received \$18,500 for a one-year commitment to work in the public mental health system in underserved communities. Historically, the Department has funded 70 Masters of Social Work graduates, 70 Masters of Marriage and Family Therapy graduates and 4 Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners. In Fiscal Year 2021-2022, the Department planned to introduce psychology (Ph.D./Psy.D.) graduates into this program, adjusting the numbers of Social Work and Marriage and Family Therapists accordingly.

REASON FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 SUSPENSION

The economic impact of COVID-19 is resulting in curtailments across County Departments, taking various forms depending upon the Department. Vacant positions within the Department of Mental Health are likely to be impacted, with hiring freezes being instituted. Reductions in the Department's key funding streams (Realignment and MHSA) will have an impact on recruitment efforts throughout the Department's entire system of care. Consequently, students being offered stipends will likely not have the ability to be hired and would be placed at risk of having to repay the stipends.

DMH will re-evaluate the Stipend Program for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 later on this fiscal year as the economic impact from COVID becomes clearer.