

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT
3-27-08 Update

Status Report

In early 2006, The DMH began a project that would assist our own nurses to become psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners. Funding for PMHNP positions came from the Mental Health Services Act, Proposition 63, which earmarked dollars only for new and innovative programs. The original goal of the PMHNP project was to fill 12 PMHNP positions in DMH wellness centers; later, 6 additional PMHNP positions were added in Field Capable Clinical Services (FCCS) programs for older adults.

Currently, there are 5 certified nurse practitioners in the DMH and 8 post-graduate students working toward PMHNP certification. There are still vacant positions for nurses interested in becoming PMHNPs in the DMH. In order to meet this need, the DMH PMHNP Development Project is continuing.

Any DMH RN that is interested in returning to school in order to become a PMHNP should contact Suzane Wilbur (swilbur@dmh.lacounty.gov) as soon as possible for assistance in enrolling in a BRN approved PMHNP program at a local university. Nurses that wish to participate in the DMH PMHNP Development Program will need to transfer to vacant PMHNP items, either at Wellness Centers or in FCCS Programs.

There are only three PMHNP programs at universities in California. One is at The University of California at San Francisco and the other two are in Southern California - California State University at Los Angeles and California State University at Long Beach. Most of the 8 post-graduate students are in the CSULB Program.

Eligibility criteria for the PMHNP Development program

Employee:

- Employed by DMH for one year (may be waived based on clinic needs.)
- Most recent Performance Evaluation rating of "Very Good"
- Recommendation letters from Program Head and Supervising Psychiatrist
- Agrees to work for DMH on a year-for-year basis after completion of furnishing hours
- Takes DMH PMHNP exam after completion of furnishing hours
 - DMH PMHNP exam requirements are:
 - NP certification by the California BRN
 - Proof of graduate study in psychiatric mental health nursing
 - California BRN-issued Furnishing Number
 - DEA number for furnishing controlled substances
 - Schedule II to V
 - Passing the Los Angeles County RN medication test.

Clinic/program:

Has a budgeted NP item

Hires the nurse on a MHC, RN, payroll item that is against the budgeted NP item.

- Program Head commits to
 - providing a preceptor – can be certified PMHNP or psychiatrist
 - providing psychiatrist supervision for furnishing hours
 - promoting nurse to PMHNP item after the nurse’s successful certification by the BRN, and passing the DMH PMHNP exam.
- Preceptor can be a PMH nurse practitioner or a psychiatrist.
 - Provides one hour of clinical supervision each week for 20 weeks.
 - At this point the student is near the completion of the graduate program. The student complies with the DMH policy on “Student Placement in DMH Programs.” (#106.7)
 - No furnishing is done during the preceptorship
- Psychiatrist provides supervision as the nurse practitioner furnishes medications for 520 hours, per BRN regulations and DMH written protocols and medication parameters. At this point, the nurse has graduated from the PMHNP program and is certified by the CA BRN as a Nurse Practitioner.

DMH:

Implements the PMHNP Development program

- Employee works 40 hours a week - four 9 hour days (36 hours) per week in clinic and one 8 hour day on coursework (4 hours of training time and four hours of own time)
- Employee is paid for 40 hours of work and receives full benefits
- Employee may apply for tuition reimbursement by DMH.

Program Requirements and Prerequisites

For nurses with Masters Degrees in Nursing, the PMHNP programs require approximately 18 months of study and an additional 520 hours of furnishing medications after graduation under the supervision of a psychiatrist.

For nurses with Bachelors Degrees in Nursing, the PMHNP programs require 30 units (approximately 3 years) and an additional 520 hours of furnishing medications under the supervision of a psychiatrist after graduation.

- Prerequisites for nurses with BSNs
 - Upper division statistics course
 - Upper division pathophysiology course
 - Physical assessment course taken within last five years
- Prerequisites for nurses with Masters degrees
 - Depends on courses taken in Masters program