# Mental Health Services Act Housing Program in Orange County: Construction and Services, Building New Lives

Judy Iturriaga, PhD, MFT Service Chief II (714) 834-5664



# Health Care Agency and OC Community Resources

- MHSA Housing Program added to original MHSA Program funding due to client need and public input
- Mental Health staff were not experts in the details of construction and financing
- Partnership developed and an MOU was created to pair OC Community Resources' (OCCR)expertise with HCA MHSA Housing staff
- Successful team approach to all projects

#### First Steps

- Began by surveying members at all OC Full Service Partnerships (FSPs) to learn what they wanted from housing
- Met with OCCR and CSH to create both the MHSA Housing Plan and the MHSA Housing Program Guidelines to guide potential developers
- Determined that funding would allow up to 185 units of new housing based on financial assumptions at that time

#### Diamond and beyond

- Diamond Apartment Homes in Anaheim, opened in December, 2008. 25 units, (15 one bedroom, 9 two bedroom, one manager's unit.) 100% MHSA occupied, one FSP provided all services and all residents
- All units Project-based vouchers; Governor's Homeless Initiative funding, MHSA "One Time" funds
- Difficulty attracting experienced supportive housing developers to OC.
- Financial markets limited ability to leverage funding

## Diamond Apartment Homes



#### **Next Operating Projects**

- Doria Apartments, Phase I opened Fall, 2011 in Irvine.
- ▶ 10 units in a 60 unit first-phase project
- Also included MHSA "One Time" funding
- All MHSA residents were enrolled in the same FSP,; another FSP assumed that contract during the fall of 2012
- Avenida Villas opened December, 2012 in Anaheim
- 100% MHSA residents, but from more than one provider source
- Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs)
- > 29 units including one manager's unit, 4 two bedroom units, and 24 one bedroom units



#### Avenida Villas



Avenida Villas Apartments
Unincorporated Orange County (Anaheim)



- 29 units
- 100% affordable
- ConstructionCompletedDecember 2012

#### Projects in Construction

- Doria Apartments, Phase II 8 one bedroom units and 2 two-bedroom units out of a 74 one, two, and three bedroom apartment project.
- Same FSP will serve as lead Provider as Phase I
- PBVs
- Construction is expected to be completed Fall, 2013
- San Clemente Seniors 15 one bedroom units out of 76
- PBVs
- Construction is expected to be completed Spring, 2014

#### Next Projects in the Pipeline

- Cerritos Family Apartments 19 units out of 70. Combined population: 10 units for TAY and 9 for PACT
- First attempt to blend populations. TAY Provider will be the lead
- Ground is expected to break shortly
- PBVs

# Approved for MHSA Funding

- Anesi Apartments, Irvine
- ▶ 11 one bedroom units for adults
- PACT population
- Shared Housing "Blanket" Program -
- Pre-approval to create up to 16 units of shared housing
- No applications received to date

#### **Recently Posted**

- Santa Ines Villas Senior Apartments 10 units out of 42 in Orange
- Older Adult FSP assigned, additional services provided by PATH Ventures
- Total operating units: 62
- Currently in construction or about to break ground: 44
- Pre-Development Activities: 37

#### Eligibility and Certification

- MHSA criteria (seriously and persistently mentally ill and either homeless or at risk of homelessness) is initially determined by the service providers
- Providers submit applications on behalf of their clients to the Residential Care and Housing Office (Res Care) for final MHSA Certification
- PBV Projects require additional screening and eligibility determination by the Housing Authority
- Property Management also reviews applications. They are given a certificate of MHSA eligibility by Res Care.
- Reasonable Accommodation Requests can be submitted to both the Housing Authority and property management when warranted.

## Service Model and Populations

- Originally worked with assumptions that all projects would be "married" to one FSP provider
- Regular "Crosswalk" meetings are held once ground has broken and, once leased, continue as "all hands" meetings no less than quarterly
- FSP's couldn't always fill projects due to conflicting eligibility requirements
- PACT Programs also have 1:15 ratios
- Homeless mentally ill (MHSA eligible) are throughout the Behavioral Health system, not just in FSPs

#### **Evolution**

Experience in projects led us to realize that:

- Residents from different providers can be mixed in a single project
- An additional service provider could be designated as "Resident Clinical Services Coordinators" (RCSCs) to be clinically available to all MHSA residents in a project, and to be the main point person for property management, service providers, and residents

#### **RCSCs**

- We are in the process of selecting two fulltime RCSCs. An MSW intern will join the team as well.
- All staff in the OC MHS system who currently have or will have residents in MHSA Housing Program sites will have specialized training in keeping people successfully housed
- Emphasis will be on preparing people for transitioning from homeless to permanent housing and continuing the recovery process post-housing.