

SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND LACDMH KICK-OFF TWO-DAY CSEC TRAINING SERIES

By Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, LACDMH Public Information Officer



On February 18 and 19, 2015, Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) hosted a two-day training for mental health agencies to treat victims of child sex-trafficking with evidence-based treatment practices. This event kicked off a series of trainings that will take place around Los Angeles County and its service areas.

The in-depth training for mental health agencies helps clinicians identify and treat victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Youth. By invitation only, it was held at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Outpatient Center in Los Angeles, and was offered to the LACDMH provider network. About 50 people attended each training day.



The training was emceed by Kathleen Austria, Deputy for Mental Health Services and Homeless Issues for the 2nd District, and by Erica Reynoso, PhD, LCSW, TAY-SOC, Juvenile Justice Mental Health Programs and Project Lead for CSEC Initiatives &

Efforts. The event was also organized by Terry Boykins, LCSW, Deputy Director, TAY-SOC, who serves as the Lead Manager for CSEC Initiatives & Efforts.

On the first day, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas provided opening remarks, affirming the importance of creating awareness about sexually exploited children and youth. Next, LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, DSW, welcomed the provider community. After discussing the lifelong journey and process in healing from trauma, Dr. Southard told the clinicians: “Be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (in helping victims of sex trafficking). For the remainder of the day, Nola Brantley, CEO of Nola Brantley SPEAKS!, provided a 6-hour training on CSEC, offering context to the psycho-social factors of CSEC.



The second day continued with more CSEC training from Crittenton Services for Children and Families. Barbara Hernandez, PsyD, LMFT, Vice President of Community Services at Crittenton, presented with her team on the psychological impact, development and trauma of CSEC victims. They also discussed their holistic approach to treating the child (from identification, screening, intake, assessment through treatment and aftercare).

The long-term plan is to eventually expand the CSEC training to all the districts so more clinicians can participate and attend.

