

MENTAL HEALTH OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INNOVATION BRIEF

INTRODUCTION

The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) was intended to drive transformational change for California's mental health system. The Innovation component of the MHSA requires California's counties to innovate to improve outcomes for people with mental health needs.

The MHSA charged the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) with overseeing California's mental health system, including the MHSA Innovation requirement. To support counties' innovative efforts, and improve opportunities for transformational change, the Commission is working to bring together county leaders, health care providers, consumers and family members, other mental health stakeholders, and representatives of California's innovative sectors, to improve opportunities for Innovation.

As part of this effort, the Commission established a Subcommittee on Innovation. The Subcommittee held its first meeting on May 24, 2017 to listen and engage with counties and others on strategies to support innovation. This brief provides a summary of the meeting, highlighting themes, challenges, and potential strategies discussed by meeting participants and Subcommittee members.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Subcommittee Vice-Chair Itai Danovitch began the May 24th meeting by introducing the idea that the vision of the MHSA is to "provide the right care at the right time and the right place for at risk families and children" and that this is an audacious goal for the MHSA. He acknowledged how California is rich with resources and the MHSA is one mechanism to support the statewide vision. Subcommittee Chair John Boyd guided the conversation to hear from counties and stakeholders on how Innovation could be the MHSA component leading this charge and how can the Subcommittee on Innovation support the Commission, counties, consumers/family members, and other stakeholders in achieving the potential of MHSA Innovation.

Emerging themes, challenges, and potential strategies

Participants identified numerous challenges and a shared desire to improve opportunities for Innovation.

- **Theme:** Innovation thrives in creativity, takes risks, tests new ideas, and can be disruptive- all for the potential to improve outcomes.
 - **Challenge:** Meeting participants stated that their local government and stakeholders are generally averse to risk-taking. Counties face bureaucratic, fiscal, and cultural challenges that block opportunities to be more creative when developing Innovative project ideas. Counties experience local fiscal and social pressure to focus on easily attainable goals providing direct services as an outcome. Meeting participants discussed how reaching for riskier goals with

uncertain prospects for success, including conducting research or testing protocols, is not easily supported.

- Potential strategies: The Commission should partner with counties, local government, consumers/family members, and other stakeholders to:
 - ✓ Reinforce for local officials, community members, and stakeholders the value of riskier goals when creating local Innovative projects.
 - ✓ Translate the use of testing and research in academia and healthcare in order to apply it to the public mental health system.
 - ✓ Set aspirational goals and create a navigable path to achieve these goals.
 - ✓ Develop strategies to achieve success in Innovation project design.

- **Theme**: Innovation can flourish at many different levels and does not always have to be something never been done before by others.
 - *Challenge*: Meeting participants stated it is unclear “what is considered innovative” and the shared perception that adaptations are less favored by the Commission.
 - Potential strategies: The Commission should partner with counties, local government, consumers/family members, and other stakeholders to:
 - ✓ Establish a shared understanding of the different levels of achievable Innovative projects.
 - ✓ Develop guidance on how to adapt a best practice and still meet the requirements for the MHSA Innovation component based on the Act and regulations.

- **Theme**: Dissemination and learning are essential in Innovation.
 - *Challenge*: Meeting participants stated there is limited sharing of new project ideas across counties during the development stage to support collaboration and reduce similarities in ideas.
 - *Challenge*: Meeting participants shared there is not enough dissemination of lessons learned or ideas that did not succeed. Counties shared the perception that failing is a negative outcome amongst stakeholders and local government.
 - Potential strategies: The Commission should partner with counties, local government, consumers/family members, and other stakeholders to:
 - ✓ Develop opportunities to brainstorm and collaborate on Innovative project ideas through a statewide learning community.
 - ✓ Identify and educate others on the potential long-term impact and learning opportunities from taking risks and “failing” in Innovation.
 - ✓ Capture and disseminate lessons learned from previous Innovative projects to create opportunities to learn and develop improved ideas.

NEXT STEPS

At the first meeting, the Subcommittee members acknowledged gathering valuable feedback in support of identifying achievable and practical statewide strategies to shift the perspective of the MHSA Innovation component across the state. The participants also demonstrated an

active interest in working collaboratively to identify these strategies. The Subcommittee members shared their commitment to work with stakeholders to develop short- and long-term strategies to create the learning community for the MHSA Innovation component.

The Subcommittee members commented recognizing the need to embark upon immediate opportunities to collaborate with counties, consumers/family members, and other stakeholders to clarify and provide guidance as counties continue to move forward with developing Innovation plans within their communities. The Subcommittee members heard a need to consider the following strategies to reduce some of the barriers discussed at the first meeting:

1. Establish a framework focused on the process of Innovation project design that counties can use to open up conversations with local stakeholders and government officials.
2. Revise the optional Innovation template to reflect the framework of Innovation.
3. Provide more clarity on requirements based on the Act and regulations to present to the Commission.
4. Identify ways Subcommittee members can engage in direct technical assistance and advisory support to counties prior to presenting to the Commission.

The Subcommittee members will consider spending the next two meetings to refine and adopt a few strategies to address some of the barriers discussed and will continue to hold future meetings to further build upon the framework of Innovation and additional strategies to achieve success in Innovation. The Subcommittee members will continue to provide updates on the planning of the statewide Innovation Summit, tentatively scheduled for Fall of 2017.