

Identifying Critical Mental Health & Substance Abuse Needs!

We launched our strategic planning effort to identify the necessary community mental health needs with meetings on September 9th (6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 1080 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz) and on September 16 (from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street, Watsonville).

Dr. Jerry Solomon facilitated the meetings, and introductory remarks and overview of services were presented by Erik Riera, Director of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, Dane Cervine, Chief of Children's Services, Bill Manov, Chief of Substance Abuse Services, Pam Rogers-Wyman, Chief of Adult Services, and Alicia Nájera, Behavioral Health Program Manager.

The audience was presented with the "Identified Gaps in the Behavioral Health System" document, which listed the areas identified by management staff. The gap areas were grouped by "programs and services", "communication, collaboration and community education", "program staffing", "timely access to treatment", and "integrated models of care".

Participants broke out into small discussion groups, and answered the following questions:

1. In looking at the key need and gap areas that have been identified so far, are there any, from your perspective, that are missing? If so, what are they?
2. Which need or gap areas are most important?
3. Which need or gap areas should we focus on working first?
4. Are there specific need or gap areas that may be unique or different for South County?

On September 9th there were 6 groups, and on the 16th there 5 groups. There was one group on each date that focused on children's services, the rest focused on adult services. To see the notes for these groups visit our website: <http://www.santacruzhealth.org/cmhs/2cmhs.htm>

Who attended?

On September 9th, there were 89 participants, and 54 at the September 16th meeting, for a total of 143 participants in all.

Thirty eight percent (38%) of participants identified as being a client/consumer, twenty three percent (23%) identified as being a mental health provider.

Eighty seven percent (87%) said their primary language was English. Fifty one percent (51%) identified as White/Caucasian. Fifty nine percent (59%) were women.

Seventy two percent (72%) were between ages 26-59; nineteen percent (19%) were age 60 or older. Four percent (4%) identified as being between ages 16-25. There were no children present at the meetings.

The percentages listed above are composite numbers. For more details on these demographic breakdowns for each meeting, and for the composite of the two, visit our website (mentioned above).

Missed the meeting?

You can review see the handouts that were disseminated, and the notes for each of the groups, on our website. You also have a chance to join us at our upcoming meetings. The dates are:

October 15:

Wednesday the 15th from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in Santa Cruz, **or**
Thursday the 16th, from 6p.m to 8 p.m. in Watsonville

November:

Thursday the 13th from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., in Santa Cruz, **or**
Tuesday the 18th 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in Watsonville

December:

Tuesday the 9th from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in Santa Cruz, **or**

Thursday the 4th from 6 to 8 p.m. in Watsonville.

NOTE:

- **Santa Cruz** meetings will be held in the large auditorium in the basement of 1080 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz.
- **Watsonville** meetings will be held in the City Council Chambers on the 4th floor, 275 Main Street, Watsonville.

Have a comment you wish to share?

Email us at: mhsa@co.santa-cruz.ca.us