

**MEMORANDUM
PLACER COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Adult System of Care**

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Richard J. Burton, M.D., M.P.H.
Placer County Health Officer and Director of Health & Human Services
Maureen F. Bauman, Director of Adult System of Care

DATE: May 21, 2013

SUBJECT: Proclaim May as Mental Health Awareness Month in Placer County

ACTION REQUESTED:

Promote mental health awareness by proclaiming May as Mental Health Awareness Month in Placer County.

BACKGROUND:

One in four Americans, 90,000 people in Placer County, live with common and treatable mental health disorders. Many of these residents are getting help with public and private services and supports; however, the stigma of mental illness keeps some people from getting the services they need. This month we are working to raise awareness about the importance of mental health and wellness.

Wellness is more than an absence of disease, it is an essential component of overall health and well-being and is tied to the balance that exists between our emotional, physical, and mental health. Whatever our situation, we are all at risk of stress, given the demands of daily life, and the challenges it brings to our home, work, and in life. Steps that build and maintain well-being and help us all achieve wellness include a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate sleep, a sense of self-worth, development of coping skills that promote resiliency, emotional awareness, and connections to family, friends, and community. We all need to take stock of our well-being through regular mental health checkups and screenings, just as we check our blood pressure and get cancer screenings, it is a good idea to take periodic reading of our emotional well-being.

Placer County has been implementing strategies in suicide prevention, stigma and discrimination reduction, and student mental health that are connected to statewide and regional programs. The suicide prevention program educates people to increase their knowledge about recognizing suicide warning signs and how to talk with individuals at risk, and identifies professional and community resources. The www.suicideispreventable.org web page empowers all Californians with life-saving tools. The Mental Health First Aid program, an education program that helps the public identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders, has trained thousands of people in the central region so that they know how to respond to persons who may be having challenges with their mental health.

Placer County's partner agency, Mental Health America, was the recipient of a mini-grant to establish a speaker's bureau. This bureau shares the real stories of persons in recovery from mental illness in order to reduce stigma towards persons with this disease. In addition, a statewide stigma and discrimination reduction campaign, "*Each Mind Matters*", has been launched to provide education about mental health awareness, equity, acceptance, and inclusion. Information on this campaign and how each person can participate in reducing stigma and discrimination can be found at www.eachmindmatters.org.

Placer County Office of Education provided Train-the-Trainer sessions on Training Educators Through Recognition and Identification Strategies (TETRIS) throughout the county and the State to increase awareness and the ability for school personnel to recognize and address the needs of students who are impacted by mental health issues. Sierra College has implemented a mental health intervention program that focuses on increasing awareness and student support for veterans and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals, as well as evidence-based suicide prevention training. The program also includes developing peer-to-peer resources and supports.

We are asking the Board to raise awareness about mental health by proclaiming May as Mental Health Month in Placer County and encouraging all of our residents to pay attention to their mental health.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action.