



# Department of Behavioral Health

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March 3, 2010

Re: Letter Inviting Innovation Ideas

Dear Community Members,

The planning process for the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) component called "Innovation" is now underway. Butte County Department of Behavioral Health invites you to contribute ideas on how best to use this part of the MHSA funding. Each Innovation idea must embody the five foundational principles of MHSA: community collaboration; cultural competence; client and family driven; wellness, recovery, and resiliency focused; and integrated service experience. The amount available for fiscal year 2010-2011 is \$699,100. This funding cannot be used for ongoing services. The overall goal and key focus of an Innovation project is to contribute to learning about mental health approaches by providing an opportunity to try out new ideas. The state Innovation Committee defines Innovative Programs as "novel, creative, ingenious mental health approaches developed within communities in ways that are inclusive and representative, especially to unserved, underserved and inappropriately served individuals." Examples include: a new or different type of collaboration between service providers which will result a more seamless services system; an initiative that would enable the service provider culture to make significant movement towards a wellness, recovery and resiliency oriented culture; a service idea that has not been tried, but has the potential to provide more effective outcomes.

Rather than proposing "best practices", we will test methods that may:

- Increase access to underserved groups (including, African American, Native American, Asian, Latino & GLBTQ communities)
- Increase the quality of mental health services, including better outcomes
- Promote interagency collaboration
- Increase timely access to services

We encourage you to become familiar with the California Department of Mental Health Guidelines for this program, by reading them on the website [http://www.dmh.cahwnet.gov/Prop\\_63/MHSA](http://www.dmh.cahwnet.gov/Prop_63/MHSA). For additional questions you can contact either Betsy Gowan (530-891-2887 or [egowan@buttecounty.net](mailto:egowan@buttecounty.net)) or Trisha Ott (891-2730 or [tott@buttecounty.net](mailto:tott@buttecounty.net)).

We would like your input on ideas for appropriate ways we can use this funding. Fill out the attached form and send it to us by **March 17, 2010 by 5:00 pm**. Your idea will be shared with a workgroup made up of community members who will decide which ideas best match the

state guidelines and local needs. Ideas from past MHSa community input will also be included in the decision process to determine how well they meet the guidelines.

In summary, the local workgroup will be considering projects that are creative, innovative, novel, time limited, contribute to learning about our mental health services, and which may not have ever been tried out before now or which may have been used in another context. Instead of asking what great services our county would like to have, the primary question is: *What is a problem or challenge, other than insufficient funding, we would like to address by trying out an idea that could make a difference in solving the problem?* Check out the state information and send your idea to us by filling out the form.

We look forward to seeing your best ideas!

*Elizabeth (Betsy) Gowan, MFT*

MHSA Coordinator  
Ethnic Services Manager