

SLO THE STIGMA

Transitions Mental Health Association's

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT TIMELINE

Proposition 63, 2004

State Senator Darrell Steinberg and Rusty Selix, the executive director of Mental Health Association in California and California Council of Community Mental Health Agencies, wrote Proposition 63 in 2004. The Proposition dedicated state funding for mental health for the first time, as well as transformed the mental health system by including people with mental illness and their families in its planning and structure. Best of all, it gave voice to the hope of recovery from mental illness.

“Mental Health Advocacy Day,” May 2004

In Sacramento, consumers of mental health services and supporters rallied at the capitol in May, asking for real, transformative change to the mental health system of care in California. Supporters at the rally from Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA) came back home enthusiastic and motivated.

That day, along with countless other rallies, marches, speeches and letters to the editor, provided momentum for the passage of Proposition 63.

Rally in SLO, October 2004

As part of a grassroots campaign in support of Proposition 63, TMHA and others in the mental health field rallied in front of San Luis Obispo City Hall, encouraging county residents to vote “yes” on the Proposition. TMHA also reached out on a grassroots level to voters at the San Luis Obispo Thursday night Farmers’ Market, and wrote press releases and letters.

The Vote, November 2004

Proposition 63 won statewide and became the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The Act addresses a broad continuum of prevention, early intervention and service needs, and the necessary infrastructure, technology and training elements to effectively support this system.

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MHSA in SLO County, 2005-2006

To provide for an orderly implementation of MHSA, Department of Mental Health (DMH) planned for sequential phases of development for each component of the Act. In San Luis Obispo County, stakeholders gathered to plan for Community Support Services, one of the early phases. Stakeholders included San Luis Obispo County Behavioral Health Services (SLOBHS) staff, community based organizations providing mental health services in concert with the County, and, most importantly, consumers and family members.

TMHA's contribution brought mental health consumers and family members to stakeholders planning meetings. This effort led to the development of family advocate and supported employment programs, and a collaborative program called Full Service Partnerships, which provides services and housing to people with severe mental illnesses. It also laid the foundation for what is now known as the Peer Advisory and Advocacy Team, composed of mental health consumers who liaise with county staff and family members on behalf of consumers with the shared goal of transforming the system.

Prevention and Early Intervention, 2008-2009

SLOBHS reached out again to stakeholders in preparation for another phase of MHSA: Prevention and Early Intervention. As a result, SLOBHS released requests for proposals (RFPs) for programs for specific ages and for underserved groups: homeless, veterans, LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Advocate/Ally), monolingual and rural residents. One RFP in particular would provide for a county-wide media campaign designed to help reduce the stigma of mental illness and to direct county residents to the services in place and newly available through MHSA.

A New Campaign: SLOtheStigma.org, 2009-2011

Among other PEI programs developed by TMHA as a result of awarded PEI funds, SLOtheStigma.org is its tool to reach all San Luis Obispo County residents. The goals of this campaign are to reduce the stigma of mental illness and to guide people to local mental health resources, including the new MHSA programs.