Los Angeles County
Mental Health Commission

"Advocacy, Accountability and Oversight in Action"

Board of Supervisors

Hilda L. Solis
First District
Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District
Sheila Kuehl
Third District
Don Knabe
Fourth District
Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

Executive Committee

Larry Gasco, PhD, LCSW
Chairman
Herman DeBose, PhD
Vice Chair
CALMHBC Representative
Songhai Miguda-Armstead, JD
Secretary
Members-at-Large
Barry Perron, PsyD
Victoria A. Sofro

Commissioners

FIRST DISTRICT
Howard Askins, MD, JD
Lawrence J. Lue
Cynthia Sanchez

SECOND DISTRICT
Herman L. DeBose, PhD
Jo Helen Graham, MA
Songhai Miguda-Armstead, JD

THIRD DISTRICT
Arnold L. Gilberg, MD, PhD
Héctor Manuel Ramírez, PhD
Merilla McCurry-Scott, PhD

FOURTH DISTRICT
Larry Gasco, PhD, LCSW
Sharon Lyle, AMGF
Etelvina De La Torre, MSPA

FIFTH DISTRICT
Barry Perron, PsyD
Victoria A. Sofro
Judy A. Cooperberg, MS CPRP

HEALTH DEPUTY, 5TH DISTRICT
Fred Leaf

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Terry G. Lewis, MS, PPS

COMMISSION STAFF
Canetana Hurd, MBA
Sarah Hutchinson, SPW1

May 28, 2015

Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

The Los Angeles County Mental Health Commission strongly supports the Board's desire to provide quality, integrated healthcare services to the people living in Los Angeles County. We recognize that integrating mental health, substance abuse and physical healthcare services is the vanguard that will ultimately transform our current healthcare delivery system into one that provides much needed whole person care. As we move forward with this integrated healthcare service delivery initiative, the Commission offers the following recommendations which we feel better represent and respond to the broad consensus that we have heard from our mental health community (includes underrepresented populations) and stakeholders, including the Service Area Advisory Committees, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and other client coalitions, and the System Leadership Team of the Department of Mental Health:

- Board of Supervisors postpone the creation of a Health Agency and first establish a leadership team, including the Directors of Health Services, Mental Health, Public Health, and their perspective Commissions (Hospital and Health Commission, Mental Health Commission, and Public Health Commission) charged with the responsibility and authority to develop a strategic plan for integrated healthcare services. This strategic planning process should be facilitated by an unbiased, outside, experienced consultant.
- The outcome of this strategic planning process will result in a shared vision of integrated healthcare services, core values, and clear outcomes or performance indicators. This strategic plan will set a clear vision for where we want to be in terms of an integrated healthcare service delivery system.
- The strategic planning process should come before any decisions are made on how we are going to implement this plan (i.e. Health Agency or a different governance model). Specifically, it is out of order to implement an Agency Model without a clear plan. Another more effective model may emerge once the planning process has been completed.
- The Board of Supervisors separate out the strategic planning process (where we want to be) from any particular integration models (how we are going to get there) and allow adequate time for the strategic planning process. We believe that investing time at the front end will maximize the success of whatever integration model is eventually implemented.

550 South Vermont Avenue, 12th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90020 ~ Phone: 213.738 4772 ~ Fax: 213 738 2120
Email: mentalhealthcommission@dmh.lacounty.gov
Website: http://wcmprd1.its.lacounty.gov:10039/wps/portal/dmh/about_dmh/mhc

- Utilize the strategic plan to determine the most effective way to integrate healthcare services in Los Angeles County. It is premature to move forward with the creation of a Health Agency without having a clearly defined vision, core values and performance indicators.

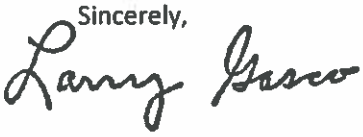
While focusing on what is required for effective service integration and improved healthcare, the strategic plan should plan for and ensure minimal transitional disruption to current services and programs and only that which is required to implement it. It should maintain, enhance, expand and replicate currently successful models of integrated care by and among the three Departments that work and work then to identify and remove those specific organizational structural and governance barriers that will allow for their expansion.

Integrated services and improved healthcare for children and youth and their families across the three Departments must be considered and addressed. The draft report fails to address improvement of children with serious emotional disturbances and their families, which accounts for more than one-half of the County mental health system's budget. We should coordinate and integrate the recommendations and proposals that arise as the three Departments are engaged with Office of Child Protection in its mission and joint strategic planning process to improve child safety County-wide.

Throughout this process, we need to ensure that the Departments of Mental Health, Public Health and Health Services continue to be recognized as equals, along with the other County Departments, in terms of accountability and direct reporting to the Board of Supervisors.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working together to integrate Los Angeles County's healthcare services.

Sincerely,



Larry Gasco, PhD, LCSW
Chairman

c: Cynthia A. Harding, MPH, Interim Director, Department of Public Health
Mitchell H. Katz, MD, Director, Department of Health Services
Marvin J. Southard, DSW, Director, Department of Mental Health
Christina R. Ghaly, MD, Director of Health Care Integration, CEO
Public Health Commission
Hospital and Health Commission