

Identifying Critical Mental Health & Substance Abuse Needs!

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services continues with its strategic planning effort to identify the necessary community mental health needs. In September we had two community meetings, and in October we had focus groups for groups that were under-represented in the September meetings. The groups were: families, older adults, veterans/veteran advocates, LGBTQ youth, monolingual Spanish speakers, and transition age youth.

In November we met with the community on the 18th in Watsonville and the 20th in Santa Cruz. The focus of these meetings was to give the community an overview of what we heard and our next steps. Participants reviewed our revised grid of gaps in services, based on input from the September and October meetings, and had a chance to add to that list.

What are the next steps? Based on identified needs, and by direction from our Mental Health & Substance Abuse Director, we may formulate work groups to carry out some of the identified needed services. We will present our plan to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors in March, 2015, for their review and approval.

In the December meetings, we will focus on Innovative Projects, one of the service components of the Mental Health Services Act. These projects are time limited, and the current Innovative Project is slated to end in June, 2015. So, we are fast tracking this work group to put together a plan for our new Innovative Program. We have identified some possible programs, and will discuss these ideas with the community at our December meetings.

See our website (<http://www.santacruzhealth.org/cmhs/2cmhs.htm>) for additional information about:

- Innovative Projects,
- the ideas we have come up with for possible Innovative Projects
- the revised gap in services grid

Upcoming meetings:

You can join us at our upcoming meetings, even if you were unable to participate previously. The dates are:

December:

Tuesday, December 4th 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers on the 4th floor, 275 Main Street, Watsonville.

or

Thursday, December 9th at 9:00 a.m., in the large auditorium in the basement of 1080 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz.