

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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November 15, 2016

Rural Health Network Development Planning Program
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Re: Barton Health HRSA-17-018 Rural Health Network Development Program

Dear HRSA Program Staff:

The El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency's Behavioral Health Division, provides a wide range of mental health services and critical leadership and communication to the County's mental health providers, advocates and stakeholders. The Vision of the El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency is "Transforming Lives and Improving Futures" and our Mission statement reads, "With integrity and respect, we provide effective, efficient, collaborative services that strengthen, empower and protect individuals, families and communities, thereby enhancing their quality of life." Our Behavioral Health Division has two office locations: Diamond Springs (Placerville) and South Lake Tahoe.

In terms of direct services, El Dorado County Mental Health provides a **24-hour hotline for Psychiatric Emergency Services** and works closely with other crisis services to provide referrals as appropriate (e.g., domestic violence and sexual assault). We offer **Adult Outpatient Services** for people over the age of 18 years with serious mental health conditions who meet certain income and/or eligibility requirements, including screening and assessment, medication evaluation and treatment, recovery groups, life skills training, vocational counseling and support referrals, and peer counseling. El Dorado County Behavioral Health also provides interventions and support for **children who have severe emotional disorders**; services include mental health assessments, treatment and support **services (including treatment at the County Juvenile Halls), and consultation to schools**, law enforcement agencies, community service partners and family support groups. Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP) offer **substance abuse education, prevention, treatment and counseling services** directly and through contracts with community agencies. Finally, the county's Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF) is a **licensed inpatient facility** that provides inpatient stabilization services for people meeting the criteria of Welfare and Institution Code 5150.

El Dorado County Behavioral Health serves as a primary source of mental health information and public resources, including a Community Education Center and Mental Health First Aid training. The **Community Education Center** has a dedicated website that provides research and offers free, interactive online courses in behavioral health; addiction; families, children and adolescents; older adults; and developmental disabilities. **Mental Health First Aid** is an evidence-based program that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact, and provides an overview of common treatments, using the curriculum developed by Mental Health First Aid USA. Mental Health First Aid focuses on risk-factors and mental illness in adults, and Youth Mental Health First Aid focuses on risk-factors and mental illness in youth ages 12 to 25.

El Dorado County Behavioral Health also leads the development and implementation of plans and services associated with the **Mental Health Services Act - Proposition 63**. The passage of Proposition 63 (known as the Mental Health Services Act or MHSA) in November 2004, provided the first opportunity in many years for the State of California to provide increased funding, personnel and other resources to support county mental health programs and monitor progress toward statewide goals for children, transition age youth, adults, older adults and families. The current MHSA Three-Year Plan covers fiscal years 2013-2016, and the El Dorado County MHSA Project Team posts information, program planning documents, and meeting announcements on the El Dorado County Mental Health website. The **El Dorado County Mental Health Commission** has two Councils – one that meets in South Lake Tahoe and one that meets on the Western Slope of the County. These monthly meetings are facilitated by El Dorado County Behavioral Health, and are intended to “review and evaluation mental health needs, services, facilities and special problems.”

El Dorado County Behavioral Health has been an active member of the Mental Health Cooperative (MHC) for the past two years and plans to continue to be an active member as we transition to the Community Mental and Behavioral Health Cooperative (CMBHC). The MHC has been actively participating in our MHSA process to develop a Three-Year Plan covering fiscal years 2017-2019 and we are working together to ensure that our plans are integrated and complimentary in an effort to fully service the needs of those that reside in El Dorado County.

Monthly, we will continue to provide at least one representative to the Community Mental and Behavioral Health Cooperative meetings, and will aggressively review, revise and communicate our direct service delivery protocols as required to foster the success of the network. We will continue to provide regular updates on network progress to our existing mental health stakeholder groups, and solicit their input and feedback, as appropriate. Based on the results of the gap analysis, we may also advocate for additional resources and support future funding requests to ensure the long term sustainability of the network protocols and communications.

We believe the proposed Community Mental and Behavioral Health Cooperative serves as a natural progression and result of the MHSA Three-Year Plan, will dovetail nicely with the proposed 2017-2019 plan, and it will greatly improve the coordination of services and public understanding of available mental health services in El Dorado County. The lack of coordination and public confusion about entry points for mental health and co-morbid health services has resulted in logistical barriers to care for populations that are in most need of support and clinical care. We enthusiastically support this effort to create a cohesive health network focused on behavioral health services, because we believe it will improve mental health care access and patient support.

El Dorado County Behavioral Health understands that grant funds awarded by HRSA are to be used for the development of the health care network and are not to be used for the exclusive benefit of any one network partner.

Sincerely,

Patricia Charles Heathers, Ph.D.
Director