



Fw: REDUCTION IN THE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT WORKFORCE

Sunday, February 22, 2009 7:57 PM

From: "Cathy & Larry Hartrum" <hartrum@hughes.net>
To: "Maureen Focht" <maureenfocht@yahoo.com>

here it is

Cathy Hartrum, President
National Alliance on Mental Illness
NAMI El Dorado County/Western Slope
Mental Health Commission, Advisory
(530) 644-5404

— Original Message —

From: Cathy & Larry Hartrum
To: [Rusty Dupray](#) ; [Helen Baumann](#) ; [Jack Sweeney](#) ; [Ron Briggs](#) ; [Norma Santiago](#)
Cc: [Neda West](#) ; gehamlin@co.el-dorado.ca.us ; [Christine Kondo-Lister](#) ; [Bonnie McLane](#)
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2009 1:41 PM
Subject: REDUCTION IN THE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT WORKFORCE

I would like to voice a serious concern I have regarding the reduction of the Mental Health Department's workforce, in particular the clinicians and mental health workers who have direct contact with mentally ill people being served by the El Dorado County Mental Health Department. These employees provide the services that are Medi-Cal billable and, more importantly, essential to address the complex needs of an already underserved population. The reductions already made, and now an additional 10 positions proposed, will impact the already heavy workloads carried by the remaining employees.

With the reduction in services and staff, a large percent of those seeking help will have their mental health decline while waiting for appointments which can be up to 60 days on the West Slope. An increase in drug and alcohol use will certainly enter the picture as these mentally ill people try to self-medicate, which is all too common and a statistically documented fact. Also, an increase in people cycling in and out of the Psychiatric Health Facility as well as the 30 day Residential Facility will occur. Others will cycle in and out of our already crowded county jail, others will lose jobs and be at risk for homelessness. How do we count the cost of the above, both in dollars and in human suffering.

Please consider these facts and reconsider the decision to cut any more positions. It is my view that the reduction has been far too drastic, especially given the fact that the mentally ill members of our community are among some of the most vulnerable, but with the right help, therapy, medication, safe and affordable housing they can overcome their disabilities and become productive members of the county. The cost of this is priceless.

Respectfully,
Cathy Hartrum, President
National Alliance on Mental Illness
NAMI El Dorado County/Western Slope
Mental Health Commission, Advisory
(530) 644-5404

Submitted by Cathy Hartrum
~~##~~ #4
at Board Hearing of 2/23/09