

February 3, 2010

Attn: Robert C. Fellmeth, Melanie Delgado, & Edward Howard:

Sonoma County Mental Health Division would like to provide some additional information that perhaps was not available when the Children's Advocacy Institute produced the report, "Proposition 63: Is the Mental Health Services Act Reaching California's Transition Age Foster Youth?"

While Sonoma County has not created a Prop. 63-funded CSS program solely and specifically for Transitional Age Foster Youth, it has designated 25% of its TAY FSP to youth aging out of the foster care system. The TAY FSP Program Manager attends meetings with Human Services staff to promote the program and coordinate these referrals. The TAY FSP provides a wide range of services available to TAFY, and the FSP works closely with other MHSA funded/supported programs which also serve TAFY including a consumer-run Wellness and Advocacy Center, and VOICES (Voice Our Independent Choice for Emancipation Support), a drop-in resource center run by and available to any TAY, but specifically focusing on TAFY.

Sonoma County's TAY FSP provides intensive case management services to 40 TAY, with 25% of those 40 set aside for TAFY. Services include mental health treatment, support and education, supportive housing services, transportation assistance, flex funding to provide for TAY FSP participant needs, employment services, support in pursuing educational goals, peer mentoring and support, and linkage to community resources such as drug and alcohol abuse services.

Mental health services include psychiatric services, psychoeducation, therapy, and a variety of groups designed to increase knowledge about diagnoses and available treatment options, symptom management, coping skills, interpersonal skills, and to develop peer support among the TAY community. A family education series provides information to family members, defining "family" as individuals providing significant personal support to TAY-age individuals.

The TAY FSP is in the process of adopting the Transition to Independence Process (TIP), a model designed to work with TAFY, which pairs each TAY with a transition team that identifies services needs based on clear goals set in partnership with the TAY and the team regarding education, employment, housing, transitioning to the community, and transitioning out of children's services and into adulthood.

The TAY FSP also provides a variety of housing supports. The TAY FSP has a contract with Tamayo House, a transitional housing program for TAY-age individuals run by Social Advocates for Youth (SAY). Tamayo House serves mostly TAFY, and has set aside 8 rooms in the house for TAY FSP participants. Tamayo House offers an affordable dormitory-style living option for youth, which includes on-site case management and 24-hour staffing. Through the TAY FSP there is also a half-time peer mentor employed by SAY to support TAFY, including TAY FSP participants. Currently that position is filled by a TAY FSP participant who is also a former foster youth. In addition the TAY FSP has a contract with Buckelew Programs, a CBO that provides housing and employment services to Sonoma County Mental Health

clients. The TAY FSP Buckelew contract provides a full-time Buckelew staff member who works exclusively with TAY FSP participants to learn independent living skills, and find and maintain independent housing throughout Sonoma County.

The TAY FSP also provides support to clients in pursuing educational and employment goals. The TAY FSP provides funding and staffing support for Sonoma County's Department of Rehabilitation Cooperative as well as Buckelew Employment Services (BES). Both of these employment programs provide employment services with a specific focus on TAY-age clients.

The TAY FSP utilizes flex funding as well as leveraging other funding sources to provide much-needed support to TAY FSP clients. Flex funds pay for things like CA IDs and/or driver's licenses, temporary housing subsidies at Tamayo House, food, medications, emergency stays at hotels, bus passes, clothing, and other necessities. Flex funding also allows for celebrations of successes for participant achievement. Through the Buckelew contract, a Scully Grant provides the ability to pay for items and services related to education and employment and has purchased driver training, tutors for college, bicycles, bus passes, computers, books, and other employment and education related expenses for TAY-age Sonoma County Mental Health clients with a focus on TAY FSP participants.

Recognizing that the need greatly outweighs the capacity of the program, the TAY FSP has made significant efforts to expand services to TAY-age individuals who are not in the TAY FSP. TAY FSP groups are available to any TAY-age Sonoma County Mental Health client, and the Family Education Series is likewise available to family members of any TAY-age Sonoma County Mental Health client. The TAY FSP partners with other providers who serve TAY and TAFY in providing services. The TAY FSP staff co-facilitate groups at Tamayo House which are available to any TAY FSP participant as well as to any Tamayo House resident, most of whom are TAFY. TAY FSP staff also support a "Quarter-Life Support Group" targeting TAY-age individuals at the MHSA-funded Wellness and Advocacy Center. TAY FSP staff also provide information and linkage to mental health services to VOICES, which targets TAFY specifically.

Although the TAY FSP currently has a capacity limited to 40 TAY participants at any given time, by expanding the availability of many TAY FSP groups and activities to other TAY and TAFY who are not in the FSP it is estimated that the TAY FSP can provide limited services to close to double our 40-client limit. \*

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- 40 TAY FSP clients
- Up to 16 additional Tamayo House residents, the majority of whom are TAFY
- Approximately 10 participants in the Wellness and Advocacy Center Quarter-Life Support Group
- Approximately 10 TAY-age Sonoma County Mental Health clients who are not in the TAY FSP participating in TAY FSP groups