

The Recovery Concept and Its Implementation Through the Mental Health Services Act

Summarized by Thomas T. Thomas

Recovery is a relatively new concept in mental health treatment, and it's both encouraging and hopeful for those of us who have a friend or loved one with a brain disorder. Recovery is now addressed through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), which passed in California with Proposition 63 in 2004. At our January 28 meeting, we expected to hear from **Margaret Walkover**, Director of Wellness, Recovery and Resiliency for Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS). Due to a temporary illness on Ms. Walkover's part, her colleague, Family Relations Manager **Rosa Warder**, gave the actual presentation from her notes.

As part of the MHSA, the county has created the Wellness Recovery Resource Hub. It is developing supports related to wellness and recovery for people on the service teams and is integrating wellness practices into the culture and operations of these teams. The Hub provides training and technical assistance for twenty MHSA programs, as well as developing a series of Wellness Centers.

The Creating Homes project is a system enhancement that expands the resources available to current clients of the service teams who are interested in and committed to pursuing paid employment, community living, and mental health recovery. The program funds financial assistance for housing, as well as vocational and peer supports and intensive case management, to help participants meet their personal recovery goals and live independently in the community.

In a separate and related move, Walkover's program is helping to develop the role of Peers Envisioning and Engaging in Recovery Services (PEERS), a program focused on homeless adult consumers, and is expanding the ten programs that BHCS currently supports that provide community based services.

The Hub currently consults at the John George Psychiatric Pavilion, providing practice change workshops in collaboration with the patient advocate's office. And Walkover's group works with Dr. Robert Ratner of Housing Services in addressing the development of support for wellness programs at adult residential facilities (i.e., "board and cares").

In closing, Warder reflected on the priorities for systems change that were so well articulated by the adult planning panel during the MHSA Community Services and Supports (CSS) planning sessions; congratulated everyone on the upcoming Family Education and Resource Center (FERC) planning; and celebrated the role of families in providing leadership to ensure that the transformation happens.