

Appendix C. 10: Supplemental Children's Data Material

Children & Youth MHSAs Prevalence Analysis Probation and Child Welfare Data Background Detail

While the MHSAs does not require an actual estimate of un-served children and youth, **the figure of 1,618 is our current planning figure for "un-served" children/youth in Santa Cruz County at 200% of poverty or below.** While this figure does not appear in Chart A below, since the MHSAs does not require an official estimate, it remains an important statistic for our local planning purposes.

Given the MHSAs focus on children/youth with serious emotional disturbances, and their families, this planning estimate was derived from comparing current service delivery to the following prevalence estimates:

- DMH prevalence estimate for Santa Cruz County total census data (2004 estimate) **(4,489 children/youth)**
- Santa Cruz County prevalence estimate for **priority MHSAs population** for children/youth **(2,633 children/youth)**. This figure is based on the combination of:
 - i. DMH prevalence estimate for Santa Cruz County households <200% poverty (2004) (1,811 children/youth), or **1,718 without foster youth;**
 - ii. Santa Cruz County Probation and Child Welfare data for children/youth at-risk **(915 children/youth)**

The following sections describe in more detail how we arrived at these estimates.

DMH Prevalence Data Compared to Santa Cruz Child/Youth Population:

In analyzing DMH prevalence data and Santa Cruz County 2004 census data, we find:

- Santa Cruz County's total youth population is **61,834** (2004 Census estimate)
- Overall DMH Prevalence estimate for this population is **4,489** total children/youth with serious emotional disturbances (SED) (based on 7.19% prevalence)

These figures represent **total** population and prevalence estimates; however, DMH has identified "**Households at 200% of poverty or below**" as the **priority population** for MHSAs planning. Hence:

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- Santa Cruz County youth population at/under 200% of poverty is **20,661**
- DMH Prevalence estimate for this population is **1,811** (based on 8.77% prevalence)

In addition, since the **MHSA identifies as priority populations those children/youth involved with the major out-of-home placing agencies of Probation and Child Welfare** (per W&I Code 5850), we decided to also compare current service data with the total number of children/youth involved with these two agencies. As priority populations with significant risk factors, the expected prevalence rate for these groups is probably higher than for the general population. The Adolescent Mental Health Policy News article in May 2004 (Katie A Lawsuit) sites national estimates that between **60% - 80% of children in foster care have significant mental health problems**. Probation wards and Child Welfare dependents are a relatively small percentage of the overall youth population, but have a much higher prevalence rate of mental health needs. Hence, we utilized the following figures to arrive at a better projection:

- Santa Cruz County core target population of Probation and Child Welfare children/youth is **1,527** (see later section for how we arrived at this figure). Approximately 70% are estimated at/under poverty level (Medi-Cal service percentages are higher, but includes children above the poverty level who receive "placement Medi-Cal"). So, $1,527 \times 70\% = 1,068$ wards and dependents at/below 200% poverty level.
- National estimate for this population of 60% (conservatively) would equal **915** Santa Cruz County wards and dependents ($1,527 \times 60\% = 915$). Foster youth typically become Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

To compare 200% of poverty prevalence with this specialized review of foster children/youth prevalence, we then utilized the following estimates:

- 20,661 children/youth below 200% of poverty, **minus 1,068 foster youth (with higher prevalence rates, considered later)** = 19,593 children/youth as priority DMH population for MHSA planning;
- Multiply this new figure of 19,593 by the 8.77% expected prevalence rate = **1,718** children/youth with SED under 200% of poverty (**without foster youth**)
- Finally, add the additional expected prevalence number for foster youth (915) to the revised 200% of poverty population prevalence above (1,718), which would equal **approximately 2,633 total children/youth** ($915 + 1,718 = 2,633$).

Hence, Santa Cruz County's total prevalence estimate of children/youth with SED (<200% poverty), **inclusive of higher prevalence estimate for foster youth**, is:

$$\Rightarrow \mathbf{2,633 \text{ total Santa Cruz County children/youth with SED}} \text{ (915 Probation and Child Welfare youth + 1,718 DMH prevalence estimate = 2,633)}$$

We think that a discussion of both planning estimates--total census, as well as MHSA priority poverty population--is important, for the following reasons:

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- 1) **Total population/prevalence estimates** (4,489 in Santa Cruz) are essential for identifying the mental health needs of all our children and youth, since serious emotional disturbances and other significant mental health issues cut across socio-economic status (as discussed in Surgeon General's Report). However, state and county departments of mental health are not the sole provider of mental health services to the total population, since various health insurers and mental health providers (family physicians, private practice therapists, etc.) deliver significant portions of these services. On the other hand, the private sector typically only provides basic out-patient psychotherapy; hence, many children and youth above 200% of poverty may require a more intensive service level commensurate with their needs than can typically be provided by these practitioners (despite mental health parity laws). **Hence, it is important that communities--including policy and law-makers--remain aware of the "total picture" when it comes to accurate identification of mental health needs compared to actual service capacity.** For Santa Cruz County, as an example, **4,489** total children/youth **would be estimated to meet SED criteria—many of them only partially, often inadequately, served in the private sector.**

- 2) **Households at/under 200% of poverty** have significant risk factors that make this group of children/youth a priority population for mental health services. It also comprises the primary focus of MHSA planning and Department of Mental Health responsibility. Children and youth in this target group are more likely to become involved with Probation and Child Welfare, and identified with significant Education issues related to attendance and performance. Particularly with national prevalence estimates of 60-80% in need of mental health services, this group of children and youth are a key priority. Hence, highlighting the increased prevalence rates for this target group is an important part of our analysis. For Santa Cruz County, as an example, **2,633** total children/youth at or under **200% poverty would be estimated to meet SED criteria.**

DMH Prevalence Data Compared to Local Service Data:

Given the analysis above, **2,633** children/youth under the age of 18 in need of mental health services at the **SED level**. So we turn now to review our local service data to compare need to actual services provided.

Approximately **1,451** total children/youth were served by Children's Mental Health in 2003/04. However, this comprises a significant portion of brief contacts, services to Special Education pupils who may be above 200% of poverty (approximately 60%), as well as other SED clients whose family income is above 200% of poverty (approximately 30%). Overall, approximately 70% of child/youth clients served are Medi-Cal or Healthy Families beneficiaries (excluding those who have Medi-Cal due to foster placement status).

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Hence, only those services provided to clients at/below 200% of poverty should be compared to our MHSA priority population of 2,633. The total number of children/youth served by Children's Mental Health would need to be compared with the total census/prevalence figure.

So, in order to refine the analysis, we identified sub-sets of total children/youth by type of service level:

- ⇒ **400 children/youth receiving SED level of service** (identified in reporting units HRA, PROB, OTHSED, STAR, STOP, UCDD, TYLER, YSTYLER, YSCPS)
- ⇒ **132 children/youth receiving 3632 Special Education mental health services, but 11 of whom were also served in SED** (identified by SCHOOL reporting unit)
- ⇒ Of the **930 "Other" children/youth**:
 - **353 children/youth receiving some level of on-going EPSDT rehabilitative or managed care mental health services** by contract agencies (CCOORD 9+ visits)
 - **577 children/youth receiving brief services of some kind** (CCOORD <8 visits; Non-CCOORD)

With **1,451** children/youth receiving some level of service in 2003/04, approximately 70% of these would be under 200% of poverty—or, **1,015 children/youth**. As noted previously, while a higher percentage are Medi-Cal beneficiaries due to "placement Medi-Cal" when in foster care, we estimate approximately 70% meet income level poverty criteria.

Since **2,633** children/youth under the age of 18 (and under 200% of poverty) are in need of mental health services at the **SED level** in Santa Cruz County—with approximately **1,015** of that same target population receiving some level of service in 2003/04—this would leave **1,618** children/youth "**un-served**" in Santa Cruz County (SED youth <200% of poverty & Prob/CWS identified)

So, while the MHSA does not require an actual estimate of un-served children and youth, **the figure of 1,618 becomes the unofficial planning figure for "un-served" children/youth in Santa Cruz County at 200% of poverty or below**. While this figure does not appear in Chart A below, since the MHSA does not require an official estimate, it remains an important statistic for our local planning purposes.

However, **up to 577 of these children/youth may** have received only crisis or brief services (CCOORD <8 visits; Non-CCOORD), so it may be misleading to consider them "served". However, these children/youth will be considered in the section addressing potentially "**under-served**" clients. (While the final MHSA Plan states these youth could be considered "un-served", we chose to include in our "under-served" estimates since it seems to better describe this population locally.)

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Background: Probation and Child Welfare Prevalence Data

It seems important to review our local foster youth data more closely, to highlight how we arrived at our prevalence estimates for this group. Again, since the MHSa points to the priority populations of children/youth involved with the major out-of-home placing agencies of Probation and Child Welfare (per W&I Code 5850), this is a key part of our analysis. Below, we compare current service data with the total number of children/youth involved with these two agencies. First, a snapshot of the youth involved:

Probation and Child Welfare Data For Assessing Child/Youth Mental Health Needs

Probation Data (2004):

- ❖ 2,353 total referrals/citations
- ❖ 1,273 court petitions that followed from these citations
- ❖ 438 youth on caseload supervision (Wards, plus 6-month without wardship)
- ❖ 273 additional youth on diversion caseload (behavioral contract, no court)

⇒ **Core Target Population: 438 caseload supervision + 273 diversion caseload = 711 youth actively involved with Probation**

Child Welfare Data (from 2002/04 CWS Self-Assessment Study):

- ❖ 3,563 children with CPS referrals
- ❖ 816 substantiated referrals
- ❖ Monthly Snapshot of foster children/youth:
 - 302 placed out-of-home
 - 113 of those in Family Reunification track
 - 189 of those in Permanency Planning
 - 161 on Family Maintenance at home with parent(s)
 - Hence, 463 in active status with CWS during "snapshot" in 2004

⇒ **Core Target Population: 816 substantiated referrals**

In the broadest sense, there is a good case to be made that the total number of children/youth who come into contact with Probation (2,353) and Child Welfare (3,563) comprise a significant risk-group (5,916) that could be expected to have some level of mental health needs. However, this number is large and surpasses the overall expected prevalence rate (when set at 7.10% – 7.35%) for Santa Cruz County's general population aged 0-17 (4,288). This may be a commentary on two issues:

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- The Surgeon General describes an expected prevalence rate of 5% - 20% of children/youth needing some level of mental health service, depending on severity. Those in the 10-20% range may have needs not commensurate with "serious emotional disturbance", but that still significantly impact functioning and meeting appropriate developmental norms. So a percentage of Probation and Child Welfare involved children/youth will likely have mental health needs **not** in the range of "serious emotional disturbance". However, those groups are likely to have mental health needs that can be met through expanded early intervention services in the next round of planning.
- On the other hand, as priority populations with significant risk factors, the expected prevalence rate for these groups is probably higher than for the general population. The Adolescent Mental Health Policy News article in May 2004 (Katie A Lawsuit) sites national estimates that between **60% - 80% of children in foster care have significant mental health problems.**

The Core Target Population numbers of **711 Probation youth, and 816 Child Welfare children/youth (1,527 total)**, are based on the assumption that **all** children/youth served by Probation and Child Welfare would have some level of mental health need based on the risk factors that brought them into contact with these major public agencies (ie., functional issues related to abuse, neglect, substance abuse, conduct). However, in using the national estimates (cited earlier by Adolescent Mental Health Policy News) of significant mental health need for foster children/youth (**60% as the conservative figure**), our local estimates of children/youth involved with Probation and Child Welfare who would need significant mental health services would be reduced to:

- ⇒ **426 Core youth in Probation needing mental health services** ($711 \times 60\% = 426$)
- ⇒ **489 Core children/youth in Child Welfare needing mental health services** ($816 \times 60\% = 489$)
- ⇒ **915 combined Prob/CWS youth in need of mental health services** ($426 + 489 = 915$)

This is how we arrived at the planning figure of **915** Probation and Child Welfare children/youth in need of priority MHSA mental health services.

Children's Mental Health Service Data to Probation and Child Welfare Children & Youth:

Santa Cruz County Mental Health served the following number of children/youth in Probation and Child Welfare during 2003/04:

- ⇒ **299 youth in Probation Core Target Population** (143 County MH; 131 Youth Services (= 50% of those served in YSABOV, YSOPS, YSOTHR, YSVSN, YSYES); 25 PVPSA (=25% of total served by PVPSA))

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⇒ **336 children/youth in Child Welfare Core Target Population** (208 County MH; 128 Parents Center)

This represents **635 combined Prob/CWS youth served** ($299 + 336 = 635$).

Hence, reasonable estimates for **un-served** Probation and Child Welfare children/youth are as follows:

⇒ **127 un-served youth in Probation** ($426 \text{ Core Pop} - 299 \text{ served} = 127 \text{ un-served}$)

⇒ **153 un-served children/youth in Child Welfare** ($489 \text{ Core Pop} - 336 \text{ served} = 153 \text{ un-served}$)

This estimate identifies **280 combined "un-served" children/youth** in Probation and Child Welfare. This represents a sub-set of the 1,618 total un-served estimate.