

**Children's Mental Health
Prop 63 MH Services Act
Stakeholder Meeting Notes:
2-25-05**

Due to the number of people choosing to discuss Children's issues, we decided to stay in one group for initial discussion of needs/gaps. The follow-up subcommittees for Probation, Child Welfare, Schools, and Community will meet (or continue meeting) for additional brainstorming before the March 18 Stakeholder meeting. In addition, parent and youth focus groups, as well as focused interagency meetings, are in progress.

Key Themes:

- 1) From youth perspective (J.S.), what helped turn his life around:
 - The sincerity of love & caring from the staff he encountered
 - Positive peer group (clean & sober) opportunities for school and leisure time
 - Job experience/support
 - Feels earlier support/intervention when younger would be very helpful

- 2) From family/parent perspective:
 - Difficult for parents to navigate the sometimes complex admission criteria
 - Particularly difficult when multiple issues require interagency, and even cross-county cooperation
 - Interface with Health and Primary Care Physicians regarding mental health screening is lacking

- 3) General group feedback/issues:
 - Fragmented system highlights need for System of Care approach
 - Mental Health "parity" laws important to strengthen (new legislation pending)
 - Dual Diagnosis Substance Abuse supports are critical
 - Broadbased community information about how to access Mental Health services is important
 - Earlier intervention services are key
 - One-stop Internet/Phone referral and information would be helpful; need to review/coordinate ACCESS role with other efforts in community (eg., COE, United Way, etc.)
 - Expanded coordination with all schools regarding more services and better linkage (eg., Student Assistance Programs, SARB hearings, etc.)
 - Dual diagnosis needs of parents, particularly in Child Welfare system, is crucial