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March 26, 2004

DMH LETTER NO.: 04-06

TO: LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM CHIEFS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
CHAIRPERSONS, LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH BOARDS

SUBJECT: COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS BETWEEN COUNTY MENTAL
HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND REGIONAL CENTERS

The purpose of this policy letter is to encourage mental health departments to collaborate with local Regional Centers in providing appropriate mental health services to dually diagnosed individuals (developmental disability and mental health) that require services by both the county mental health department and the Regional Center.

According to California Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code, Section 4696, county mental health departments and Regional Centers are required to collaborate, meet on a yearly basis, and establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines service delivery. In addition, the MOU is to identify staff to better serve this population. Despite the provisions of this law, this population has been underserved by both service delivery systems.

DMH, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the California Mental Health Directors Association (CMHDA), and the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) have worked collaboratively on the Mental Health Task Force for Persons with Developmental Disabilities in addressing statewide issues for this population. In addition, DDS and DMH are working collaboratively to address this issue (See Enclosure). The recommendation for improving county mental health and regional center collaboration are a direct result of the discussions, in this Task Force. DDS, DMH and all members of the Task Force understand that the collaboration and coordination must occur at the local level to properly serve the often-complex array of services of this population, which typically crosses over traditional established areas of responsibility.

DMH and stakeholder groups are encouraging your leadership to improve outcomes for this population. Please refer to Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code, Section 4696, or on the web at: <http://www.sen.ca.gov>, under Legislation and Codes links, for further clarification of your agency's responsibilities.

County mental health departments are encouraged to consult with DMH, as needed, to resolve any questions or concerns regarding this letter. Please contact your county liaison in the County Operations Sections below:

DMH County Operations Medi-Cal Contract Managers

Bay Region

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Troy Konarski (916) 654-2643
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Sincerely,

Original signed by

STEPHEN W. MAYBERG, Ph.D.
Director

Enclosure

cc: Mental Health Task Force for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
California Mental Health Planning Council
Chief, County Operations Section, North and Bay Area Regions
Chief, County Operations Section, South and Central Regions