

REPORT TO THE TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE  
STATE OF HAWAII  
2016

PURSUANT TO SECTION 334-10(e), HAWAII REVISED STATUTES,  
REQUIRING THE STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH TO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL  
REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE ON  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE PLAN

PREPARED BY:  
STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
DECEMBER 2015

## **HAWAII STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE**

The State Council on Mental Health (“Council”) is an active, advocacy group providing a voice for children, youth, adults, and their families on behavioral health issues. Its membership is comprised of twenty-one dedicated volunteers representing consumers, family members, providers, community members, and state employees who give their time, energy, expertise, and experience to improve and advocate for a system of care that provides quality mental health service to the people of Hawaii.

The mission and vision of the Council guides its evaluation of Hawaii’s mental health care through presentations from key community stakeholders, and reports from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) and the Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD).

The mission of the Council is to advocate for a Hawaii where all persons affected by mental illness can access treatment and support necessary to live a full life in the community of their choice. The vision of the Council is for a Hawaii where people of all ages with mental health challenges can enjoy recovery in the community of their choice. Further, as defined by both state and federal law, the purpose of the Council is to:

- Serve as an advocate for adults diagnosed with a severe mental illness, for children and youth diagnosed with serious emotional disturbance;
- Advise the state mental health authority on issues of concern, policies, and programs;
- Provide guidance to the state mental health authority on the development and implementation of the state mental health system’s plans; and
- Monitor, review, and evaluate the allocations and adequacy of mental health services within the state on an ongoing basis.

The Council is legislatively mandated to provide an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature on the implementation of the statewide comprehensive integrated services plan (“Plan”). Section 334-10(3), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) states that, “The Council shall prepare and submit an annual report to the governor and the legislature on implementation of the statewide comprehensive integrated service plan. The report presented to the legislature shall be submitted at least twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session.”

This report provides significant events for FY2015 and the Council’s plans for FY2016.

### **Significant Events of FY2015**

- With the assistance of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Technical Assistance Group, the Council was able to develop a Strategic Plan for the next three (3) years.

- To comply with state and federal laws, the Council participated in the development of the Statewide Comprehensive Integrated Service Plan and reviewed the Behavioral Health Report (formerly named the Implementation Plan). This Ad Hoc committee not only reviewed the Plan, but also wrote two (2) sections of the Plan. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee were fully engaged in the process and felt valued in its deliberations. Recommendations, inquiries, and questions about the Behavioral Report were sent to the Administrators of both CAMHD and AMHD.
- The Council has monthly standing meetings; however, for FY2015 six (6) meetings were held, of which, only four (4) meetings had quorum. The Council is optimistic that with the submission of two (2) bills to the 2016 Legislature on behalf of the Council and the County Service Area Boards to re-define “quorum,” the Council and Service Area Boards will be able to meet more frequently and hold productive meetings during FY2016.
- During FY2015, the Council carefully monitored the closure of the adolescent beds at Maui Memorial Hospital where youth had to travel off island for acute psychiatric treatment; the planned reduction of psychiatric beds at Hilo Memorial Hospital; and the use of Telemedicine at Kona Hospital. These hospitals were negatively impacted by the Hawaii Health System Corporation’s \$50 million budget shortfall system-wide. The Council stayed abreast of the situation through a presentation by its Chief Executive Officer, consumers and community stakeholders’ input, and monthly reports by the representatives from the Maui and Hawaii Service Area Boards. For 2016, the Council plans to follow-up on the results of the reduction of psychiatric beds and the usage of Telemedicine on Hawaii Island.
- Through the years, the Council has monitored and expressed concerns about the operations of the AMHD’s Crisis Line of Hawaii and has invited the AMHD Crisis Services Coordinator to provide updates on the progress of changes being made to its operation. Prior to the name change in 2015 from the ACCESS Line to the Crisis Line of Hawaii, the Council was educated on the new focus and operational changes of the program moving forward.
- A continuing focus of the Council is to educate the community about mental health with emphasis on trying to decrease the stigma associated with mental illness in our communities and also be educated by other entities within the mental health system of care. To accomplish this, one of the Honolulu Police Psychologists was invited to educate the Council on training efforts for police officers on mental illness, jail diversion into the mental health system, and its collaboration with the AMHD and local hospitals on Oahu.
- Although the Council and advocates for mental health in Hawaii have made enormous strides in educating the community about the stigma of mental illness and the marginalization of people who live with mental illness, there is still much

work to be done. For instance, on August 3, 2015, the Star-Advertiser published an article concerning the criminalization of homelessness and mental illness across its front page. Consequently, the Council wrote a letter to the Star-Advertiser's Editor expressing its concern on the writer's choice of words in the headlines. The Council believed that the article increased the stigma associated with homelessness and mental illness and diverted its attention from comprehensive, research-tested approaches to the issues in the article.

### **Council Plans for FY2016**

- During the 2016 Legislative Session, the Council plans to support AMHD's bills/initiatives that will expand bed capacity at the Hawaii State Hospital to allow individuals who need that level of care to have access to forensic services. Further, the Council will also support a bill submitted by the CAMHD that will lower the age of consent for youth who seek mental health counseling and related activities.
- The collaboration of probation officers and case managers, within the mental health system, is a critical component of treatment in providing a higher level of care for persons with mental illness to keep them from going in and out of the penal system. Therefore, the Council will be supporting efforts to educate probation officers about mental illness and inviting key stakeholders to assist the Council in making this educational opportunity happen.
- In reviewing the Behavioral Health Report, the Council was concerned about the number of consumers evicted from AMHD Group Homes. In following-up on this issue, the Council plans to invite the AMHD Housing Services Coordinator to provide insight into the steps involved in evicting consumers from the group homes, and the expansion of group home beds for homeless individuals who live with mental illness.
- An emerging issue that the Council will be working on in 2016 is older adults with mental health disorders. Based on the literature (Journal of Aging and Social Policy, Vol. 23, Issue 3, 2011), older adults with mental health disorders are the least likely age group to receive specialty mental health care. This is problematic because mental health assessments and treatments are more complex for older adults due to high rates of dementia and other medical problems. The Council will support efforts within the AMHD to coordinate a system of mental health care for older adults since many of these individuals are treated by providers who do not specialize in their mental health needs.
- As the world is moving towards political instability and the widening gap between rich and poor, human trafficking for sexual exploitation is a predictor that will increase in the future and will have detrimental mental health consequences. In 2016, the Council plans to review the research, to learn about the impact of trafficking of men, women, and children and to understand the effective health

interventions to mitigate the psychological damage of these individuals. The Council plans to advocate for these individuals in Hawaii through presentations, policy, and collaboration with the Department of Health's Family Health Services Division.

Finally, the Council expresses its gratitude to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health and the Adult Mental Health Divisions for their partnership in strengthening mental health services for those living with mental illness. We look forward to a productive year in 2016.