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To: Supervisor Sue Frost, District 4
Supervisor Phil Serna, District 1
Supervisor Patrick Kennedy, District 2
Supervisor Rich Desmond, District 3
Supervisor Don Nottoli, District 5

Re: Mental Health Board Vacancies

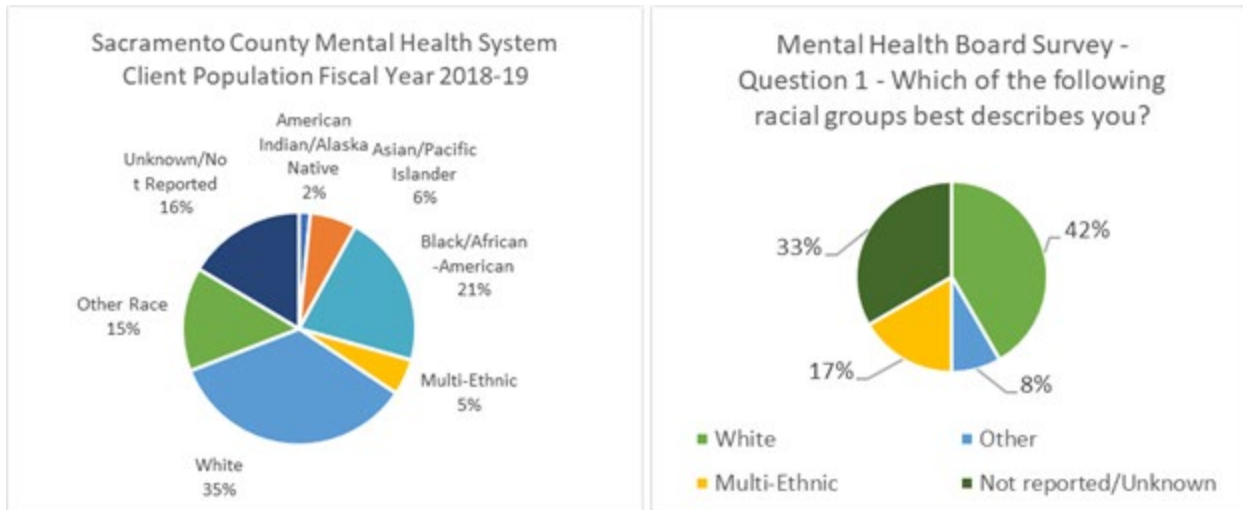
The Sacramento County Mental Health Board (MHB) consists of 15 community member seats, of which four are currently vacant. These four vacant seats include: a family member seat from District 2 (Kennedy), a public interest seat from District 4 (Frost), a consumer seat from District 4 (Frost), and a consumer seat from District 5 (Nottoli). The purpose of this letter is to call your attention to the importance of helping the MHB fill these vacant seats with qualified and appropriate individuals as soon as possible in order for this Board to execute the responsibilities it has been charged with, as mandated by California Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 5604.2.

As stated in Article IV, Section 1 of the Sacramento County Mental Health Board Bylaws: "The Board of Supervisors is encouraged to appoint individuals who have experience and knowledge of the mental health system. The Mental Health Board should reflect the ethnic diversity of the client population in the County." Additionally, in Article IV, Section 5 of the MHB Bylaws, as well as Section 5604 (a) of the Welfare and Institutions Code: "The composition of the Board shall reflect the ethnic diversity of the client population in the county. The Mental Health Board shall reflect ethnic diversity as well as advocacy for special interest groups such as children and the aging population."

We are asking for your help in recruiting and appointing community members with appropriate backgrounds to the MHB to help us reach maximum capacity. In an effort to strengthen the commitment to improving capacity to achieve behavioral health equity in Sacramento County, we want to focus on authentic representation and true diversity of the make-up of our board. As such, we ask that you focus on ensuring that the community members you appoint to the Mental Health Board reflect the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of the Sacramento community.

Last month, the MHB conducted a short survey of its current membership and learned that of the 12 members currently seated: 42% identify as white, 17% identify as multi-ethnic, 8 percent identify as another race. The racial identities for the remaining 33% of members were unknown or not reported. In comparison, the composition of the Sacramento County mental health system client population is approximately 35% white, 21%, African American, 15% other race, 6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 5% multi ethnic, 2% American Indian/Alaskan Native. The racial identities for the remaining 16% of the client population were unknown or not reported.

Draft – not approved by the Mental Health Board



Notably, no seated members of the MHB identify as Black/African American, while this group represents the second largest category of the Sacramento County client population at 22%.

With regard to Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, the survey results indicated that of the MHB’s current membership: 25% identify as being of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent and 50% do not identify as having Hispanic or Latino origin or descent. The Hispanic/Latino ethnic backgrounds for the remaining 25% of members were unknown or not reported. In comparison, within the Sacramento County mental health system client population, approximately 20% identify as Hispanic/Latino and 53% identify as not Hispanic/Latino. The information is unknown for the remaining 27% of the client population.

The MHB will be partnering with local mental health client and family advocacy organizations to recruit potential new members, and we hope that these efforts will increase applicants from diverse communities within Sacramento County. Together, we have a collective sense of shared responsibility for the delivery of behavioral health services that address health inequities and meet the needs of Sacramento county’s cultural diversity inclusive of racial, ethnic, linguistic, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, degree of physical and cognitive ability and disability, spirituality and religious beliefs, and lifestyle choices among others.

Respectfully,

Cc: Bruce Wagstaff
 Chevon Kothari
 Ryan Quist