

County of Santa Clara Mental Health Board
Systems and Planning Committee Annual Report
Submitted by Larry A. Blitz, Chairman

Continuing the process originated in 2010, the Systems and Planning Committee of the Santa Clara County Mental Health Board held monthly meetings assessing the programmatic and fiscal operations of the Santa Clara County Mental Health Department. At the ten meetings held throughout the year, Mental Health department heads and selected employees provided an in-depth view of the operations of each respective department.

The Mental Health Director was asked for the following issues to be introduced to the Committee:

1. What is the statutory authority of each of the disciplines and programs? Why does this program exist?
2. What are the objectives and goals of each program?
3. What is the financing structure of each program?
4. How are these programs funded in other CA counties?
5. How do these programs differ from other Counties?
6. How successful are these programs?
7. What are the major obstacles of meeting the provisions of the statute?
8. What does your department need in order to be more successful?
9. What new ideas and suggestions do you have in order to meet more of your goals and responsibilities?
10. What are your pipe-dream ideas?

Each of the department heads provided presentations describing their respective programs and funding mechanisms and answered questions from Board members as well as the community as a whole. The results include providing Board members and the public a detailed account of Department activities and programs. Of significant importance is discussion centering on how the various means of funding support such programs.

The goal of these informal hearings is to inform the Board of the programmatic and financial realities of the Mental Health Department. The Committee respectfully requests clarifications per the discussions, suggests ideas that may or not be relevant, and in summary, is in a better position to become a more supportive advocate for the Mental Health Department. A second goal is for the Systems and Planning Committee to join the Department in Health and Hospital discussions and present the Boards position on many of the issues that the Department must face. The Board will make independent recommendations to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

The Systems and Planning Committee will continue the progress of 2011 by holding additional meetings that dig deeper into programs and funding. The Committee encourages all Board members to attend these meetings and looks forward to a very rich process in 2012.

Respectfully Submitted, Larry A. Blitz, Chairman of the Systems and Planning committee