

**Quality and Productivity Commission  
28<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program  
"Los Angeles County: Ahead of the Curve"**

**2014 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: CARE CLINIC INNOVATION  
LONG BEACH MENTAL HEALTH**

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION:** JUNE 1, 2013  
(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before June 30, 2013)

**PROJECT STATUS:**  Ongoing  One-time only

**HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT?**  Yes  No

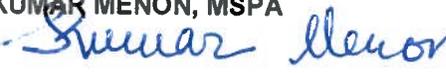
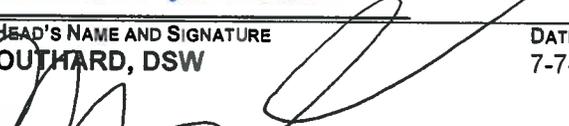
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. Summarize the problem, solution, and benefits of the project in a clear and direct manner.

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A challenge confronting all community clinics is how best to maximize existing resources to deliver quality and timely recovery services. At Long Beach Mental Health Center (LBMHC), the Affordable Care Act has provided the impetus to find an innovative yet practical solution: a "one-stop" centralized outpatient program called "Care Clinic." It not only improves client access to services, but also uses creative management to incorporate basic health screening, substance abuse and mental health services. Its engagement and assessment system addresses rising caseloads, missed appointments and costly hospitalizations while complying with documentation and outcome reporting requirements. Moreover, the Care Clinic ensures immediate evaluation of each client's specific medication needs by maximizing the direct and active participation of the staff psychiatrist at the point of enrollment and service initiation. Care Clinic has shown excellent results, including a decrease in hospitalization by 17% in the first three quarters, an increase in staff time devoted to direct services, a decrease in the number of missed appointments, positive feedback from clients, improved staff morale and closer adherence to Medi-Cal requirements.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$ 125,677	\$UNK	\$ UNK	\$ 125,677	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

<b>SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b> Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Adult System of Care—550 S. Vermont Avenue; 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Los Angeles, Calif. 90020		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-738-2756
<b>PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME</b> Emilia Ramos, L.C.S.W., Program Head Long Beach Mental Health		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 562-218-4044  <b>EMAIL</b> eramos@dmh.lacounty.gov
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)</small> KUMAR MENON, MSPA 	<b>DATE</b> 7-7-2014	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-738-4258  <b>EMAIL</b> kmenon@dmh.lacounty.gov
<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> MARVIN SOUTHARD, DSW 	<b>DATE</b> 7-7-2014	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-738-4601

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**1<sup>st</sup> FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY:** Describe the Challenge, Solution, and Benefits of the project.

**Challenge:**

Without new funding or additional staff resources, the clinic staff, supervisors, and manager, confronted issues of client engagement, assessment, medication evaluation, wait times and a range of other important issues related to claiming and outcome documentation. Client satisfaction and practical incorporation of bi-directional (health, substance abuse and behavioral health) care delivery for adults suffering with mental illness, became the central focus of the incorporation of the Care Clinic. Long Beach Mental Health Center is one of the largest adult clinics in the County of Los Angeles' Department of Mental Health system. The current open, individual clients served totals over 2,300; with increasing numbers of clients seeking help in beginning their recovery each day.

Utilizing talented and dedicated staff and managers, the clinic carefully evaluated service barriers and their traditional operational approach to providing client services. Waiting times for engagement and evaluation of new clients applying for service enrollment was the primary issue identified, but a range of secondary allied issue also surfaced during program development planning and discussion sessions. In short, the Long Beach Mental Health unit recognized that in order to solve the major problem, they must also resolve other issues associated with the primary engagement challenge.

**Solution:**

A multi-disciplinary work group envisioned the Care Clinic project and, shortly before June 2013, the proposal was implemented. It relied on an innovative, yet practical approach which could be replicated in any of the clinics serving adults. The Department's Adult System of Care (ASOC) has embraced and adopted the model, initially as a pilot level at four additional clinics (12/16/2013) and more recently (4/1/2014) as a part of expected clinic re-design implementation at the remaining seventeen adult clinics. It required a dedicated commitment by staff—both clinical and non-clinical—to affect beneficial change for consumers served by the Long Beach program. The goal was to incorporate regular general client health evaluations in order to positively impact the overall health of mental health clients—clients whose life expectancy is considered years shorter due to the lack of attention given to physical or chronic health issues. The effort was focused to improve delivery of clinic services, while also increasing basic health awareness and hard linkage of consumers to their primary health care provider, often for the first time in a client's life. Staff “buy-in” to support moving away from longstanding traditional operating approaches was essential.

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**Solution (Continued):**

Within the existing allocated budget, the program established a Care Clinic team, matching clinical and staff with lived experience to assist and support the medical staff and the vision of the Care Clinic. While preliminary estimates anticipated benefits to clients and staff, they required considerable changes in the work structure and assignments of Long Beach Mental Health staff. Without the infusion of new staff resources, the work group restructured staff and completed a comprehensive infrastructure re-design. A decision was made to house the newly configured Care Clinic team in one centralized area of the facility. The change essentially created a one-stop, centralized operation where all open cases coming in for a medication visit are seen by Care Clinic. Clients are initially met by team members for case management needs. When appropriate and/or upon their initial medication evaluation, clients are referred to the mental health nurse for screening and monitoring of various health care issues such as: diabetes, obesity, hyperlipidemias, etc. The clients' visit to the Care Clinic culminates with being seen by their treating psychiatrist to confirm and review the assessment interventions and initiate medication support. The Care Clinic integrates health care screenings, substance abuse, and mental health services fully into the clients' treatment plans. Additionally, the Care Clinic operation directly addresses the Department's and clinic's needs to improve documentation regarding both claiming documentation and client quality care assurance (QA). The Care Clinic staff review all clinical charts, prior to client appointments, ensuring compliance is met with all Departmental and State QA required guidelines. The Care Clinic also assists clients through provision of hard linkage to primary care physicians when applicable. The Care Clinic team ensures that clients gain access to health services, are provided with appointments, and are reminded of their health appointment dates and times. The team also provides clients with assistance to those medical appointments when able and needed. In addition to providing quicker access to psychiatric medication services and improved access and linkage to health services, connection and linkage to substance abuse services (internal and external referrals) are a vital piece of the Care Clinic model. Necessary and required laboratory services are provided on site, and reviewed with the client by their psychiatrist and shared with their medical doctor, when a release is present in the chart, to assist the team in capturing any medical concerns early in the treatment process. These steps were designed to prevent costly emergency or psychiatric hospitalizations, avoid findings in audits and improve the health of clients suffering with mental illness.

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**Benefits:**

- The Care Clinic offers an easily replicable and cost effective solution by utilizing Wellness Outreach Workers (WOWs) and dedicated clinical and support staff.
- The Care Clinic has helped decrease hospitalizations by 18%, 16% and 15% in the first three quarters respectively in comparison to the previous year's quarters, totaling 27 less psychiatric hospital stays. Based on an average length of hospitalization of 8.9 days and a daily bed rate of \$523, this has amounted to a total cost avoidance of \$125,677. Complete data for fourth quarter is pending.
- The Care Clinic has significantly increased the amount of staff time used in directly serving clients, using a team approach and reducing missed appointments.
- The Care Clinic has decreased missed appointments by utilizing WOWs to call and remind clients of their appointments.
- The Care Clinic has received positive feedback from clients, including how this innovative approach has better met their total health needs.
- Staff have reported improved morale and pride in the improvements they are helping to make in the lives of clients served.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS):**

The Care Clinic project has embraced the Operational Effectiveness, Fiscal Sustainability and Integrated Service Delivery County Strategic Plan Goals. The program strives to not only improve the effectiveness of services but to deliver them in a customer service friendly and efficient manner, improving access to care. The Care Clinic was able to implement such a program without new resources, proving to be both sustainable and fiscally prudent. Finally the Care Clinic has incorporated health screenings and direct hard linkage to health providers by leveraging resources and maximizing measurable positive outcomes for clients.

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savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation.

**Cost Avoidance:** Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

**Cost Savings:** A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

**Revenue:** Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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**ANNUAL= 12 MONTHS ONLY**

Number of hospital stays avoided for three quarters = 27

Average length of stay for psychiatric hospitalizations = 8.9 days

Number of hospital days avoided = 27 x 8.9 = 240.3 days

Day rate for hospitalization = \$523

Total hospitalization costs avoided for three quarters = 240 x \$523 = \$125,677

NOTE: Complete data for fourth quarter is pending.