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WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE - WIC

DIVISION 4. MENTAL HEALTH [4000 - 4390] (Heading of Division 4 amended by Stats. 1977, Ch. 1252.)

PART 2. ADMINISTRATION OF STATE INSTITUTIONS FOR THE MENTALLY DISORDERED [4100 - 4336] (Heading of Part 2 renamed from Chapter 2 (of Part 1) by Stats. 1977, Ch. 1252.)

CHAPTER 2.5. Families of Persons With a Serious Mental Health Disorder [4240 - 4245] (Heading of Chapter 2.5 amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 948, Sec. 7.)

4240. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The symptoms and behaviors of persons with a serious mental health disorder may cause severe disruption of normal family relationships.

(b) Families are often the principal caregivers, housing providers, and case managers for family members with a serious mental health disorder.

(c) Families of persons with a serious mental health disorder more often than not have little or no legal authority over their adult family members with a mental health disorder who are sometimes difficult to manage. Consequently, they need advice, skills, emotional support, and guidance to cope with the stress of caregiving in order to be effective and helpful.

(d) Involved families are of inestimable value to the publicly funded and professionally operated state and county mental health system and programs emphasizing self-help can be the best way to assist families in maintaining the cohesion of family life while caring for and assisting a family member with a mental health disorder.

(e) Since the state's mental health resources are limited and are increasingly being directed on a priority basis toward provision of services to persons with a serious mental health disorder, informed and active families helping one another can effectively extend and amplify the value of state mental health dollars.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 948, Sec. 8. (AB 2119) Effective January 1, 2025.)

4241. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature, by this chapter, to support an organized program of self-help in which families exchange information, advice, and emotional support to enable them to maintain and strengthen family life and secure or provide more effective treatment, care, and rehabilitation for family members with mental health disorders.

(b) It is further the intent of the Legislature to utilize an existing organized statewide network of families, who have family members with mental health disorders, as a means of delivering the services designated in this chapter.

(Amended by Stats. 2014, Ch. 144, Sec. 74. (AB 1847) Effective January 1, 2015.)

4242. As used in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Family" means persons whose children, spouses, siblings, parents, grandparents, or grandchildren have a serious mental health disorder.

(b) "Serious mental health disorder" means a mental health disorder that is severe in degree and persistent in duration and that may cause a behavioral disorder or impair functioning so as to interfere substantially with activities of daily living. Serious mental health disorders include schizophrenia, major affective disorders, and other severely disabling mental health disorders.

(Amended by Stats. 2019, Ch. 9, Sec. 20. (AB 46) Effective January 1, 2020.)

4243. (a) All funds appropriated for the purposes of this chapter shall be used to contract with an organization to establish a statewide network of families who have family members with mental health disorders for the purpose of providing information, advice, support, and other assistance to these families.

(b) A request for proposal shall be issued seeking applicants who are capable of supplying the services specified in Section 4244. The respondent organizations shall demonstrate that they:

- (1) Focus their activities exclusively on persons with serious mental health disorders.
- (2) Have experience in successfully working with state agencies, including, but not limited to, the State Department of State Hospitals.
- (3) Have the ability to reach and involve the target population as active members.
- (4) Have proven experience providing structured self-help services that benefit the target population.
- (5) Have experience holding statewide and local conferences to educate families and professionals regarding the needs of persons with mental health disorders.
- (6) Have the financial and organizational structure and experience to manage the funds provided under the proposed contract.

(Amended by Stats. 2014, Ch. 144, Sec. 75. (AB 1847) Effective January 1, 2015.)

4244. The Director of State Hospitals shall enter into a contract with the successful bidder to provide services that shall include, but not be necessarily limited to, all of the following:

- (a) Production and statewide dissemination of information to families regarding methods of obtaining and evaluating services needed by family members with mental health disorders.
- (b) Provision of timely advice, counseling, and other supportive services to assist families in coping with emotional stress and to enable them to care for or otherwise assist family members with mental disorders.
- (c) Organizing family self-help services in local communities, accessible to families throughout the state.
- (d) Conducting training programs for mental health practitioners and college and university students to inform current and future mental health professionals of the needs of families and methods of utilizing family resources to assist clients with mental health disorders.

(Amended by Stats. 2014, Ch. 144, Sec. 76. (AB 1847) Effective January 1, 2015.)

4245. Contracts entered in pursuant to this chapter shall:

- (a) Have an annual contract period from July 1 through June 30 of each fiscal year unless the Director of State Hospitals or the contractor terminates the contract earlier.
- (b) Require an annual report by the contractor accounting for all expenditures and program accomplishments.

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 24, Sec. 108. (AB 1470) Effective June 27, 2012.)