

## ADULT SERVICES POLICY COUNCIL 2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Each year there is more evidence that the number of seniors and adults with disabilities who reside in our county is increasing. There are over 37,000 county residents who are 65 years of age or older and over 30,000 county residents with severe disabilities. Already, San Luis Obispo County has a larger percentage of persons over the age of 65 (14%) than the state average (11%) We are seeing evidence that the number of adults (21 to 65 years of age) is also increasing. As we age we become more reliant on local health and human services. Because of the health and human services that we currently provide, adults with disabilities and seniors are able to continue to live in their homes, but the current services system will not be able to accommodate the needs of an increasing consumer population. Local and state governments will be stressed by the increased costs of caring for the aged and disabled. (Sources: DATA BOOK, a Community Report on Seniors and Adults with Disabilities Who Live in San Luis Obispo County, produced by the Adult Services Policy Council and the Tribune February 16, 2006)

The mission of the Adult Services Policy Council members is to work together to find ways to meet the needs of this expanding target population. Our members represent forty-four (44) public, non-profit, and private services providers and boards and commissions that provide health and human services to and advocate for this population.

This year, the Policy Council focused its attention on three areas:

- Access to healthcare for low income adults and seniors with disabilities
- Disaster Preparedness
- Political advocacy

Monthly meetings have been used to educate the member representatives, to provide input on community initiatives, to educate elected officials on the needs of our target population, to discuss common concerns, to determine needed action and to work together to solve problems.

In the area of Healthcare, we have supported the County's effort to expand primary care services to low-income county residents through its contract with Community Health Centers. Community Health Centers (CHC) reports to the Policy Council on its current services and plans for expansion at each meeting. The County contract manager reports on CHC's performance. Policy Council members provide feedback to CHC on any barriers to services experienced by our consumers and on either geographic or specialty service gaps. Over the past year, customer

satisfaction with CHC services has improved. We want to thank the County for creating a healthcare “home” for many of our consumers.

The members provided input on the proposed Medi-Cal Managed Care system for San Luis Obispo County residents. We were asked to be a focus group and give input on the County plan to implement the Mental Health Services Act. The members also received presentations on Medicare Part D, Prescription Drug Plan, Veteran’s Services, Parolee/Probationer Re-entry Services and Advanced Health Directives.

Disaster Preparedness was on everyone’s mind. In particular, how do non-profit service providers utilize the emergency response system put in place by the County Office Emergency Services (OES). Both the Public Health Emergency Services Coordinate and OES staff came to the Policy Council to explain what is currently in place and listen to member concerns about isolated or disabled clients, and residents of long-term care facilities. From those meetings, a countywide Emergency Response Task Force is now in place to coordinate emergency response and enhance response capacity.

The Policy Council has been active in supporting legislation that would help adults with disabilities and seniors. We met with representatives of our state and federal legislators to discuss with them the needs of adults and seniors. We explained to them the barriers to services that continue because of categorical funding and regulations. We produced advocacy materials to describe the impact that reduced funding in health and human services would have on our consumers ability to meet their basic needs and remain living in their own homes.

Most of our programs were able to maintain their current level of funding and services this year.

We continue to sponsor the Adult and Aging Multidisciplinary Team. The AAMDT has a team of programs supervisors from Public Health, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Services, Adult Protective Services, the Public Guardian, and the Sheriff’s Department who are available to meet with service providers, family members, neighbors, and consumers to help them determine the best case activities and case plan. The AAMDT has conducted 47 case consultations.