



Media Guide for  
Sonoma County Behavioral Health Division's  
MHSA Contractors

Introduction

The following pages contain guidelines for media strategies for Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Programs implemented by organizations contracted with the Sonoma County Behavioral Health Division.

The purpose of this media guide is to add consistency to every level of printed, online, social marketing and other communications.

Consistency in the presentation of the messaging and values will build stability and raise the level of recognition among our constituents, as well as in the community at large. The strength of this system relies upon its consistent implementation. Therefore, we ask our contractors and staff to adhere to the standards in this guide for all communications pertaining to the MHSA system of care in Sonoma County.

For further information or clarification, please contact Amy Faulstich, MHSA Coordinator at [amy.faulstich@sonoma-county.org](mailto:amy.faulstich@sonoma-county.org)

Scope

These guidelines apply to any use of media by staff and program partners of Sonoma County Behavioral Health when promoting Proposition 63-supported programs and activities. For the purposes of these guidelines "media" means any activity for both online and offline publication and commentary, including without limitation to media interviews, blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and Google+, email blasts, newsletters, websites, advertisements (including online, print, radio, television, billboard, etc), promotional materials, press releases and media advisories.

In accordance with these guidelines, MHSA Sonoma County contractor's and staff are free to publish materials or comment via social media in the furtherance of program objectives.

## Background

Understanding the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and Sonoma County Behavioral Health's role as a County organization working together with Community-Based Organizations in implementing MHSA programs is critical to consistently communicating the purpose and intent of the MHSA Statewide.

## The Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63)

In November 2004 California Voters passed Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). Prop. 63 provided the funding and the framework needed to transform the community mental health system from a crisis-driven system to one focused on prevention and wellness and to expand services to reach previously underserved populations and all of California's diverse communities.

Specifically, the MHSA provides funding for community services and supports, prevention and early intervention, housing, innovation, capital facilities, technology and workforce investment and training.

This structure enables California counties to work in collaboration on:

- ❖ Development and implementation of common strategies and programs
- ❖ Fiscal integrity, protections, and management of collective risk
- ❖ Accountability at state, regional, and local levels

## Describing MHSA Programs

**It is critical that all partner activities be consistent with the values of the *California Mental Health Services Act*:**

- ❖ Community collaboration
- ❖ Cultural competence
- ❖ Client/family-driven mental health system for children, transition age youth, adults, older adults
- ❖ Family-driven system of care for children and youth
- ❖ Wellness focus, including recovery and resilience
- ❖ Integrated mental health system service experiences and interactions

**Consistent with the values and goals of the Mental Health Services Act, contractors and staff must maintain a professional tone in all communication. No comments that either disparages, undermines or misrepresents the community mental health system, community mental health stakeholders, providers, consumers or their family members will be tolerated.**

## Confidentiality

In all media activities your organization must adhere to the same laws and confidentiality rules that apply to all other communications inside and outside your organization.

### **Personal stories and information about clients are confidential.**

All media communications must comply with all laws and privacy standards, including but not limited to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). According to HIPAA, one must not publish “individually identifiable health information” including:

- ❖ The individual’s past, present or future physical or mental health or condition;
- ❖ The provision of health care to the individual;
- ❖ The past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual.

Anything that identifies the individual (common identifiers include: name, address, birth date, Social Security Number) must not be published.

### ***Examples of Do’s and Don’ts:***

**Do:** Prior to joining the program, Mr. T. had spent 18 years in various institutions and hospitals. Since joining the program, Mr. T. has not been hospitalized once, and has been living independently since March 2007.

**Don’t:** Joe Thompson joined our program two years ago after having been released from Mercy hospital.

For more information on confidentiality and privacy, visit <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/index.html>

***MHSA programs are an important component in realizing the promise of Proposition 63 to transform and expand California’s mental health system and to promote prevention and wellness. Your adherence to our marketing guidelines is intended to ensure that all marketing communications are consistent with this vision and with the values of the MHSA.***

When MHSA programs are identified by name and/or the MHSA is identified as the funding source of your program, communications should consistently use the standard MHSA descriptions as identified on Pg. 2.

***Protocol for Press Releases and Media Advisories:***

All press releases, media advisories and other press material referencing programs funded by MHSA must include the following tagline at the bottom of the release/advisory:

*\_\_\_\_\_ program is funded by Sonoma County Department of Health Services through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63). It is one of several MHSA programs implemented by Sonoma County Behavioral Health, a county government organization working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. For more information, visit: <http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/about/behavioralhealth.asp>*