

SPECIAL FINANCIAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

JUNIOR LEVEL DEPARTMENT
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. *Develop a marketing approach that will assist in the recruitment of mature persons to participate in the Enriched Foster Home Program.*

RESPONSE:

Concur. As this program is a joint effort of the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Public Social Services, numerous and ongoing efforts have been made in recruitment by both departments. Advertisements have been placed in local publications and presentations have been made to various church groups. However, the best source of new foster home parents has been the result of recommendations by existing foster home parents. These individuals have the knowledge and skills to work with this population of children and thus do a good job of identifying potential new foster parents for the program.

The need for foster parents has been experienced more in the desert area of the County. The Department recently hired an individual to work with the desert program and assist in more targeted efforts to recruit from that geographic area.

RECOMMENDATION:

2. *Provide additional "gap" shelters for temporary stays for disturbed children who need time away from their home environment. Arrange for enough mental health workers to be available to supervise treatment.*

RESPONSE:

Concur. Since 1994, the Department has had a contract for three crisis shelter beds which provide shelter and counseling for minors on a short-term basis. This contract was recently reduced due to lack of use. A related service the Department provides through joint efforts with the Riverside County Office of Education is a respite program. This program provides breaks for children who need time away from the parent for several hours at a time. The possibility of expanding this program to be able to accommodate children for several days is currently being explored.

RECOMMENDATION:

3. *Expand the day care treatment program for specialized groups by using volunteer student workers majoring in social sciences. Graduate students to be assigned as interns to help reduce the waiting list of children needing help.*

RESPONSE:

Partially concur. The Department operates two day treatment programs for minors, one in Palm Springs and one in Riverside. These are highly structured with intensive clinical work being done several hours daily. The programs are expensive and require a minimum number of minors of the same age and general need for a program before it can be initiated. In some geographic areas, the need is too small for such a program to be cost effective, even with the use of graduate students. A small group held once or twice a week is often the alternate that can be implemented.

RECOMMENDATION:

4. *Explore the possibilities of additional children's mental health clinics in all areas of Riverside County.*

RESPONSE:

The Department has dramatically expanded the availability of services in all geographic areas of the County over the last ten years. The variety of services to children and families as well as the amount and geographic accessibility has increased. All clinics have expanded staff substantially and new clinics were added in Corona, Temecula, Moreno Valley and Riverside in the last ten years. Services have been provided in schools and there are specific off-site programs provided in Jurupa and Desert Hot Springs. Implementation of Managed Care added over 100 individual service providers plus the addition of a specialized unit of services to dependents of the Court in 1997, and has expanded services dramatically to minors, some of whom are less severely disturbed than previously. Within the last year a provider began providing outreach and treatment services in the Banning/Beaumont area. A contract has been developed for expanded services in the eastside of Riverside and services will begin in Jurupa in September. Negotiations continue with a potential provider for Desert Hot Springs, Perris and Lake Elsinore. Staff is being added for Corona, Perris and Coachella areas through existing clinics as well.

There has been a significant reduction in waiting time so most clinics are able to provide services when requested or refer to other providers when needed.