UPDATE

A bi-monthly newsletter of the Solano County Health & Social Services Department.

November, 2004
Volume 1, Issue 5

Letter from the Director

Dear Reader:

H&SS plays an important role in meeting the community's mental health needs. Most of the Department's resources are directed towards clients with serious mental health problems and are geared towards low income and uninsured residents. Resources, unfortunately, are limited and the Department has had to cut services and reduce mental health staff over the past two fiscal years. Some relief should come, however, from the recent passage of Proposition 63 – the Mental Health Services Act. Prop 63 provides new funding to counties to expand mental health services. Revenues will come from a 1% tax on incomes over $1 million. Once the program is fully up and running, Solano County should get about $8 million annually – a 20% increase over the current $41 million spent on mental health services. These will be new monies as Prop 63 prohibits using funds to replace existing programs.

This edition of **UPDATE** highlights Solano County's Mental Health Services.

Mental distress and disorder within Solano County can have a profound effect on an individual's quality of life. The impact often extends beyond the individual to the family and the community at large. Studies show that one in five Americans has a mental disorder in any one year. For Solano County, that would mean 85,000 people – or roughly the population of Vacaville.

Mental illness can be the cause – or consequence -- of many social ills including poverty, homelessness, poor academic performance, lost economic productivity, domestic violence, child abuse, suicide, and physical illness. Mental disorders range from mild or temporary conditions to long-term serious disability. Lower levels may cause little or no impairment and may be handled within the person's family or social network. As impairment increases, a person's ability to function decreases and higher levels of treatment are needed.

Mental illness frequently co-exists with other medical disorders. Depression increases the risk of dying from heart disease by as much as three-fold. People with both diabetes and depression have greater likelihood of experiencing a greater number of diabetes complications compared to those without depression.

Depression is a leading cause of absenteeism and diminished productivity. Because of the stigma associated with mental illness, the greatest barrier to dealing with mental disorders is not the availability of treatment, but rather with getting people into treatment. Only 1 out of 2 people with a serious form of mental illness seek help for the disorder. In fact, depressed people are significantly more likely than others to visit a physician for some other reason as they seek another or a less stigmatized explanation for their difficulties. Depression-related visits to physicians account for a large portion of health care expenditures. Many depressed patients undergo extensive and expensive diagnostic procedures and then get treated for various other complaints while the mood disorder goes undiagnosed and untreated.

Sincerely,

Patrick O. Duterte
Director

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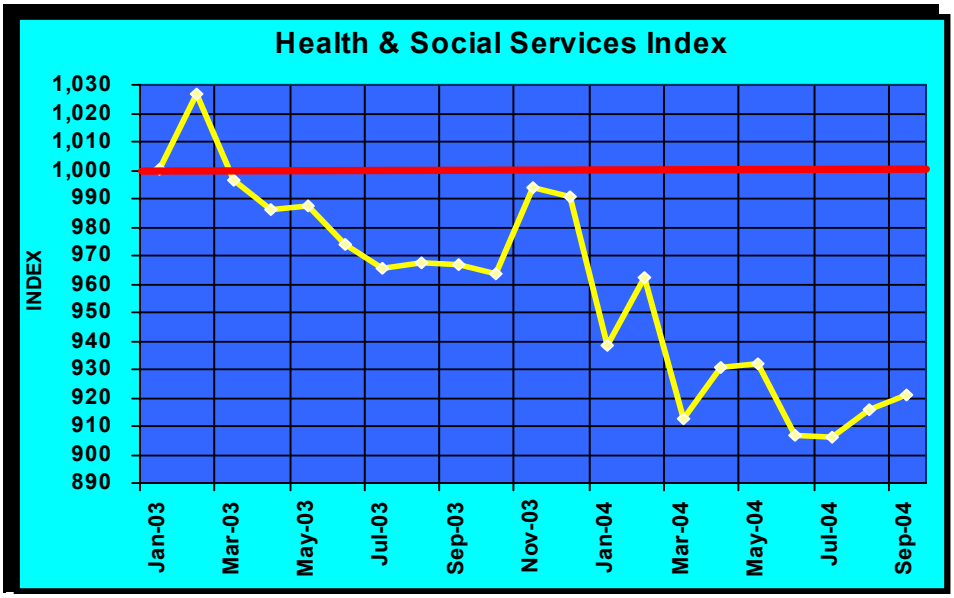


The **Health & Social Services (H&SS) Index** combines workload data from 15 key services provided by H&SS, along with data on unemployment in Solano County, to provide a monthly indicator of community demand for health and social services.

All of the monthly numbers — clients served, program caseloads, number of unemployed, referrals, etc. — are added together and then converted into an index score. The January 2003 total serves as the index bench line figure of 1,000. The index scores for subsequent months reflect change from the January level. Like the Dow Jones or NASDAQ, higher scores suggest positive developments — fewer people looking for work or requiring the services that H&SS provides, for example. Falling numbers suggest increasing need for H&SS's safety net services.

Please note: The index is not a direct measure of need. Many socioeconomic factors influence need. At the same time, various factors, such as eligibility guidelines and available revenues, influence the amount of service that H&SS can provide regardless of need or demand for service.

INDICATOR	Jan-03	Mar-03	May-03	Jul-03	Sep-03	Nov-03	Jan-04	Mar-04	May-04	Jul-04	Sep-04
Number Unemployed	13,800	12,800	12,300	13,800	12,100	11,800	13,100	13,600	11,700	13,500	11,200
Number of I&R Calls	2,772	2,555	2,596	2,906	3,029	2,178	2,655	2,520	2,059	2,184	2,416
CalWORKs Cash Assistance Recipients	9,405	9,439	9,794	9,753	9,968	10,116	10,402	10,452	11,021	10,982	11,135
CalWORKs Applications & Restoration Requests	521	454	451	530	521	394	469	567	429	472	474
Food Stamp Recipients	11,515	12,261	12,690	12,517	13,106	13,312	13,761	14,389	15,420	15,472	15,773
General Relief Recipients	256	320	323	325	359	394	385	367	374	387	428
Medi-Cal Enrollment*	49,001	49,562	50,190	50,958	51,641	51,905	53,255	52,954	53,589	54,093	54,491
CMSP Cases (End of Month)	4,228	4,515	4,746	4,794	4,941	4895	4,922	5,266	5,227	5,413	5,529
Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Referrals	98	115	123	110	90	82	106	95	95	90	95
Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Confirmed	40	27	35	20	31	16	36	29	26	27	39
In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Authorized Cases	2,254	2,254	2,226	2,231	2,278	2,299	2,324	2,329	2,329	2,328	2,347
Child Abuse Referrals	390	378	382	324	349	313	387	452	410	304	372
Medical Clinic Visits	2,595	2,752	2,664	2,496	2,721	2,024	2,615	3,025	2,614	2,454	2,267
Dental Clinic Visits	447	431	434	425	379	278	283	401	315	290	335
Mental Health Clients	2,701	2,833	2,793	2,754	2,784	2,559	2,756	2,804	2,592	2,529	2,620
Substance Abuse Clients	699	635	621	529	530	510	566	602	575	651	676

***** May - September, estimated based on H&SS cases. Note: Because actual Medi-Cal enrollment numbers alone would represent over one-half of the index, Medi-Cal enrollment has been adjusted (weighted) to 1/3 of the actual total.

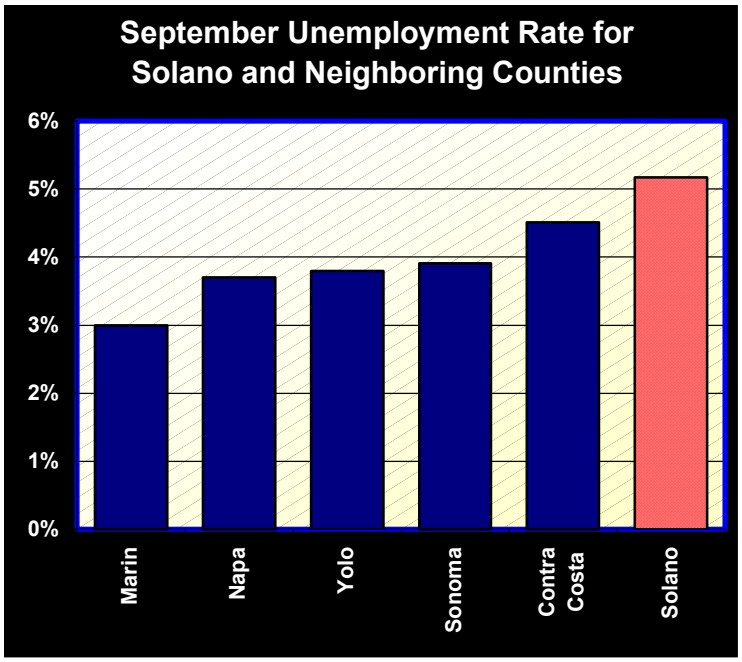
EMPLOYMENT & UNEMPLOYMENT

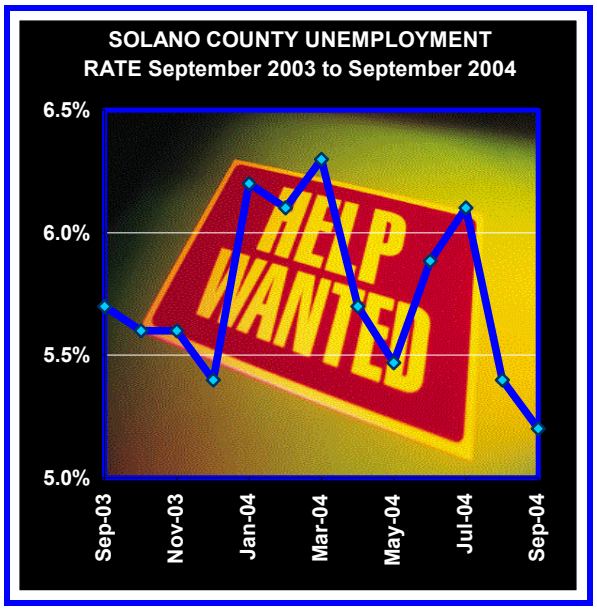
Solano County's labor market has improved over the past year. Even so, Solano County generally lags behind the rest of the North Bay according to most measures.

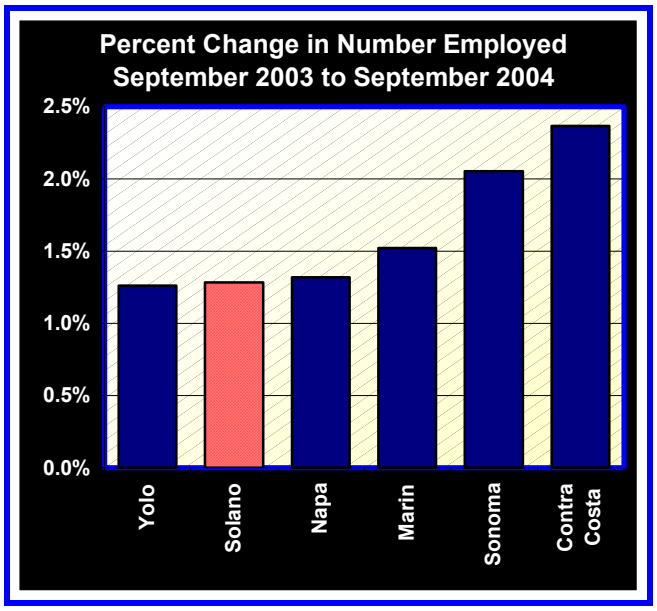
The County's unemployment rate remains the highest in the North Bay.

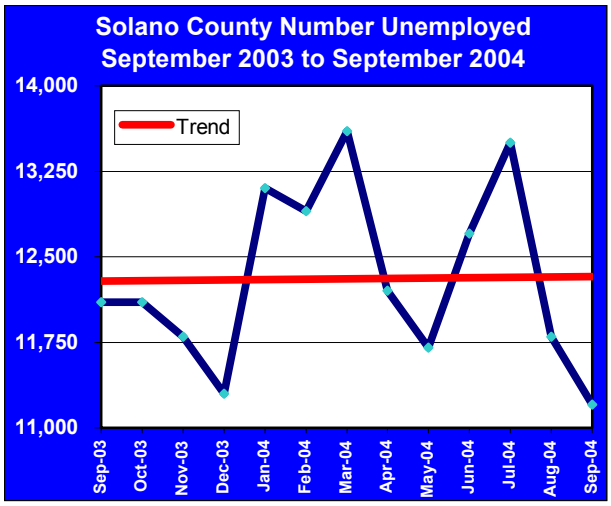
Since the beginning of the year, Solano County's unemployment rate has fallen by 1 point. However, the County has not done as well as other parts of the region in generating new employment opportunities.

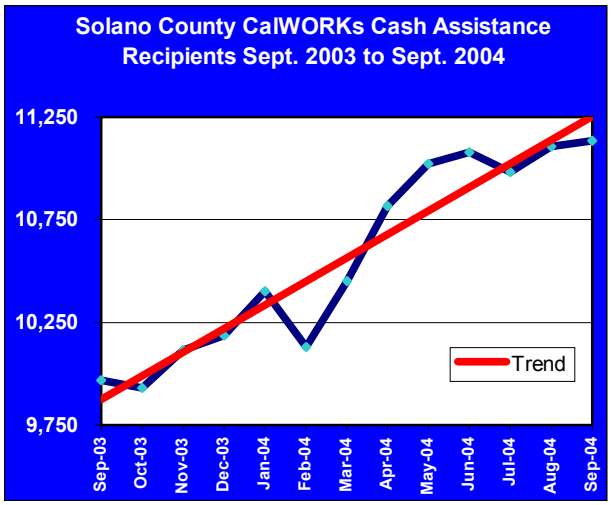
The recent increase in the H&SS Index (opposite page) is due in large part to the improving employment picture.

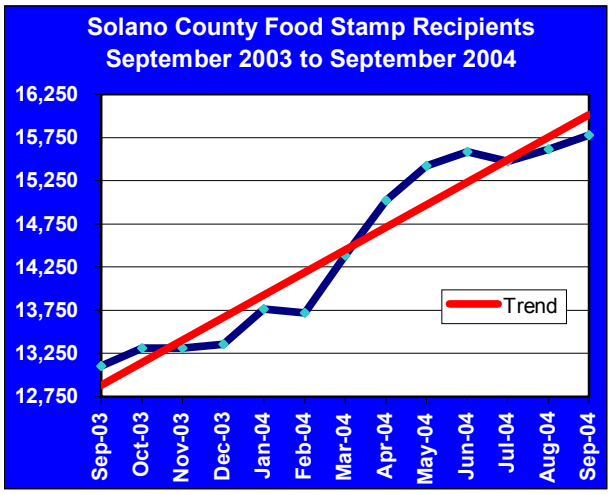












ECONOMY/EMPLOYMENT

- The number of unemployed in Solano County decreased by 600 in September compared to August continuing a downward trend since July.
- The number of unemployed stood at 11,200— the lowest number since December, 2002.
- The unemployment rate fell to 5.2 percent in September compared to 5.7 percent for the September of 2003.
- Although employment figures show improvement over the last two months, Solano County still compares unfavorably to neighboring counties. (See page 3.)

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

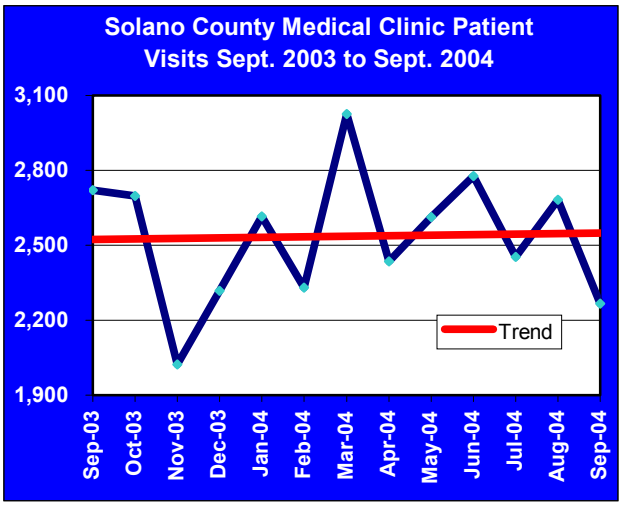
- The number of CalWORKs and Food Stamp recipients remained generally stable through the summer months. The number of recipients continued to increase but at slower rates than a year ago. Public assistance caseloads remain at the highest levels since welfare reform began.
- The number of new CalWORKs applications continues to increase. There were 6 percent more new applications (including requests for restoration) during the most recent six month period (April to September) compared to the previous six month period (October, 2003 to March, 2004). The continuing increase suggests a degree of softness in the local labor market and perhaps an indication that growth is tilted towards lower paying jobs.
- Even with the improving economy, the number of CalWORKs recipients in September was 11.7 percent higher than from the previous September. The year-to-year increase for Food Stamps was even higher — 20.3 percent.

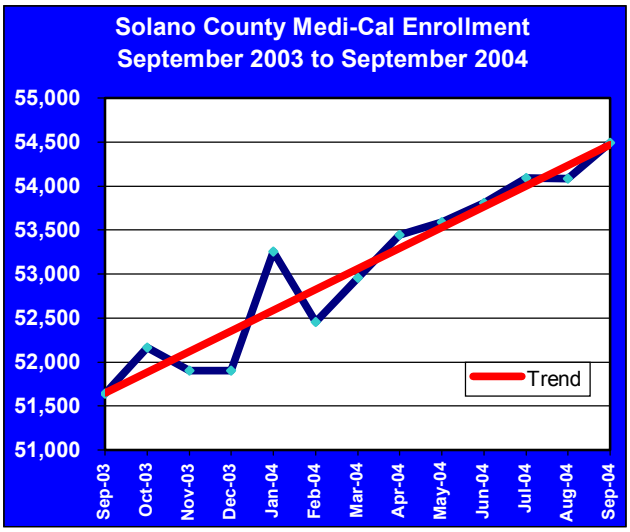
PUBLIC HEALTH

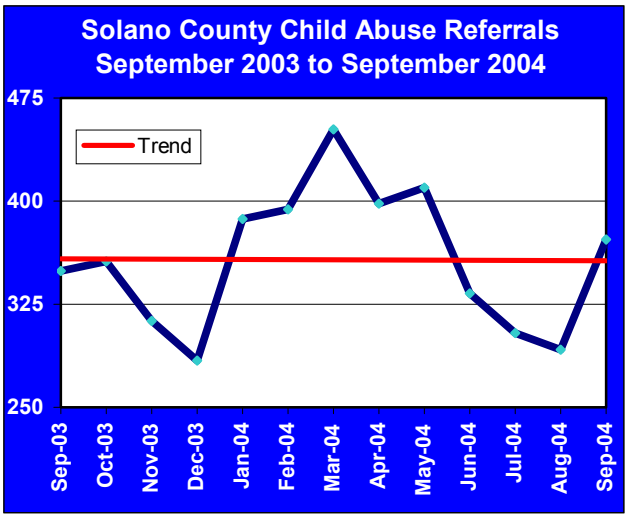
- Visits to the two Solano County health clinics — Fairfield and Vallejo — fell slightly in September compared to August. Over the course of the year, visits were fairly constant — probably a reflection of lack of capacity than lack of demand.
- Medi-Cal enrollment increased 5.5% between September 2003 and September 2004.
- 1 of every 8 county residents is enrolled in Medi-Cal.

CHILD WELFARE

- The number of referrals for child abuse or neglect rose in September as it usually does when school starts back.
- Over the course of the year, the average number of referrals remained constant but there was considerable seasonal variation.





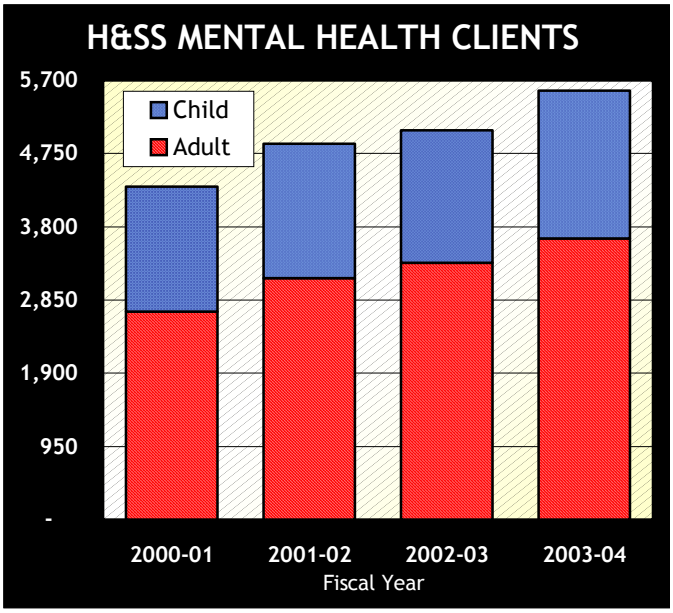


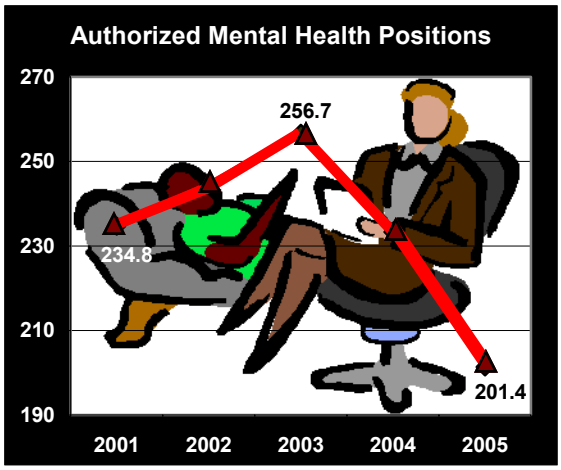
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OVERVIEW

- In Solano County the number of mental health clients receiving services from the county has steadily increased from 3,681 in the 1998-99 fiscal year to 5,570 in the 2003-04 fiscal year. This is more than a 50% increase in the number of consumers receiving services in just six years.

- The number of funded mental health staff positions first kept pace with the increase in clients but, since FY 2003, the number of personnel has fallen by more than 20 percent — from 256.7 in FY 02-03 to 201.4.

- Overall, clients were evenly divided by gender in 2003-04. But, although there were approximately the same number of males and females receiving mental health services, there were approximately 400 more males under age 18 receiving mental health services compared to females of the same age group. Among adults, there were approximately 400 more females than males receiving services.

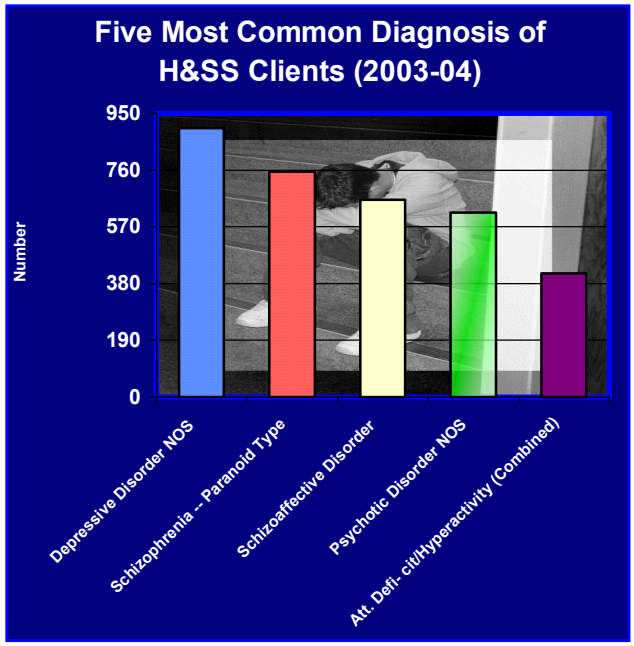




MENTAL ILLNESS IN SOLANO COUNTY AT A GLANCE
(2004 ESTIMATES)

Total Population	416,000
Adults (18+)	300,000
Children (0 to 18)	116,000
Adults with Some Degree of Mental Illness	65,000
Adults with Serious Mental Illness	20,000
Adults with Serious & Persistent Mental Illness	9,000
Children with Some Degree of Mental Illness	20,000
Children with Serious Emotional Disturbance	9,300

Source: University of Texas Medical Branch and Survey & Analysis Branch, Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), SAMSHA, *Mental Health Needs Assessment Survey Project*, http://psy.utmb.edu/. 2004 Population estimates based on California Department of Finance and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projections.



Solano County Mental Health Services

It is estimated that 5.5 percent of all adults in Solano County have Serious Mental Illness (and more than half of those have what is known as Serious and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) while 7 percent of children are classified as Seriously Emotionally Disturbed.

The most common diagnoses of the Solano County mental health consumers are Depressive Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, followed in order by Schizophrenia Paranoid Type, Schizoaffective Disorder, Psychotic Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Combined Type.

A satisfaction survey was given to mental health consumers in November 2003. Although there were an insufficient number of responses to generalize over the entire Solano County mental health consumer population, those that did complete the survey were satisfied with the services provided. In the area of satisfaction with services provided to youth, 88% of the parents/caregivers were satisfied, 8% were neutral, and 4% were dissatisfied. Of the youth, 78% were satisfied with the services they received, 12% were neutral, and 10% were dissatisfied. Of the adults ages 19 to 64, 87% expressed general satisfaction, 9% were neutral, and 4% were dissatisfied. For adults age 65 and above, 95% were satisfied, 2% were neutral, and 2% were dissatisfied.

MENTAL HEALTH DEFINITIONS

About 5.4 percent of adults are considered to have a **"serious" mental illness** (**SMI**). Serious mental illness is a term defined by Federal regulations that generally applies to mental disorders that interfere with some area of social functioning. About half of those with SMI (or 2.6 percent of all adults) were identified as being even more seriously affected, that is, by having **"severe and persistent" mental illness** (**SPMI**). This category includes schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, other severe forms of depression, panic disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

A **"dual diagnosis"** occurs when an individual has at least one mental disorder as well as a substance abuse disorder. While the disorders may interact differently in any one person, at least one disorder of each type can be diagnosed independently of the other. Also known as **"co-occurring disorders"**, people with dual diagnosis mental health and substance abuse disorders can be difficult-to-serve. Such individuals tend to have multiple health and social problems, requiring a variety of sometimes costly services. Traditional barriers between the mental health and substance abuse systems, each with its own treatment philosophies, administrative structures, and funding streams, can prevent individuals from getting the care they need and deserve.

Federal regulations also define a sub-population of children and adolescents with more severe functional limitations, known as **"serious emotional disturbance"** (**SED**). SED is defined as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

SED includes schizophrenia but does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have a serious emotional disturbance.

HOW TO ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

In Solano County, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services can be accessed in a number of ways. The most direct route is to call the Behavioral Health Access Line at **1-800-547-0495** The line is answered 24/7 and referrals for service can be made Monday through Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm. The access line can refer individuals to the full range of mental health and substance abuse services. Children's services can also be accessed through elementary school sites throughout the County. Mental Health clinicians stationed at various schools receive referrals from teachers. Staff then coordinates with the school and family to provide services at the school location. Individuals who feel they have an urgent need for mental health services and are experiencing acute psychiatric symptoms may come into the crisis clinic. In Fairfield there is a 24-hour crisis facility that is always open and staffed. In Vallejo, the crisis clinic is open Monday-Friday 8:30am to 5:00pm.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse services are authorized based on need. The access line will refer individuals to an initial face-to-face assessment with professional staff. Staff collects a variety of information and develops an initial treatment plan with the individual. If an individual does not qualify for County services, they are referred to an appropriate provider.