



CALIFORNIA NETWORK OF MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS

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Dear CA Network Members,

I am writing to share the good news that the CA Network is alive and well. Building on 26 years of history, we are ready to mobilize our self-determined future, and we hope you will be a part of the change! Our Board is actively seeking **new staff** for a variety of important positions to lead us into the future. Please note that all applications are due on 3/5/2010. With deep roots in our principles and our past, we now focus on our future.

As we have worked recently in Sacramento to sustain the Network, it has become absolutely clear that it is now a new day. Criticizing the status quo is not sufficient to get our needs met. We must envision what we want and work collaboratively to create that. If we wish to leverage our combined strength and intelligence effectively, we must dialogue with one another, making room for and welcoming diversity. While we do not all agree all of the time, we need to practice our principles, and demonstrate that we are experts on respect and inclusion.

Our power is in our unity **and** our diversity. The power of the movement will be expressed if we can rise above petty differences to stand together. Here and now, what do we want?

- Well-funded consumer-run peer support
- The client voice at the center of planning and policy decisions
- Self-determined services
- Holistic alternatives that honor the body-mind-spirit connection
- An end to stigma and discrimination

We look forward to hearing your additions to this list when we gather in the Regions. We invite you to join us this spring at the Regional Forums, which will offer training and networking opportunities on the theme: “**Reaching Across Our Regions: Grassroots Recovery.**” Just as each one of us has walked a recovery path, our statewide organization is recovering, and we want to draw on our regional roots to guide our next steps. Let’s take advantage of our need to conserve resources by returning to a simpler, more locally-focused gathering to celebrate our unity and build our collective voice! These Regional Forums will take place in May and June 2010 in each of the five regions. Watch for a Save the Date Flyer coming soon!

If you would like to help organize as Regional Forum planner, please contact us at 1-800-626-7447 so that we can put you in touch with you the Regional Forum Coordinator in your area. Local client-run organizations and affiliates need our support, and we need yours! This state is much too large to organize effectively without building on the groups that have congregated throughout our diverse state. We will be introducing new networking opportunities for affiliate groups as part of our reorganization.

Please plan to come to Sacramento to speak out against the proposed Budget Cuts that affect us. In early April 2010 (between the 5th and the 16th), there will be a series of mental health advocacy legislative visits to the State Capitol in Sacramento. These legislative visits will culminate in a major effort on Wednesday, May 26th which is **Disability Capitol Action Day!** We need to show up at the capitol in our yellow shirts as a CNMHC contingent to speak out and educate legislators. Please watch for our news alert with the details of these activities. We hope you can join in.

We welcome members and friends to visit the Network office in Sacramento. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us! Watch our website for updates, including Regional WebPages to provide you with up-to-date information about self-help and client-run activities in your area.

With hope and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ST Kuehn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sharon Kuehn
Interim Executive Director