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MONTEREY COUNTY'S SYSTEM OF CARE GAINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

[SALINAS, CA]—Monterey County's System of Care: La Familia Sana/The Healthy Family was nationally recognized for achievement in communications at the 2008 Excellence in Community Communications and Outreach (ECCO) Recognition Program, which took place on July 18 in Nashville. The ECCO Recognition Program highlights communications achievements that promote children's mental health.

The Behavioral Health Division of the Monterey County Health Department, as part of Monterey County's System of Care: La Familia Sana-The Healthy Family, was recognized with the following awards:

- **Community Outreach: Parents & Caregivers** for the website: www.mcsystemofcare.org
- **Professional Outreach** for a community outreach event hosted at Maya Cinemas.
- **Partnership Development** for the "Score Card Report" a community-friendly report showcasing outcomes for children and youth impacted by mental health challenges in our county.
- **Media Outreach** for a local media campaign "Coming Together for Children's Mental Health."

The "Coming Together for Children's Mental Health" media campaign was developed, and features, local children, youth and their families receiving services in our system of care. The media campaign is a collaborative effort between Children's Behavioral Health and the Department of Social and Employment Services and aims to promote local resources for children and youth impacted by mental health challenges and their families. "A line in the TV spot references 'It may feel like you are all alone, but you are not,' a sentiment many of our youth and families can relate to. With the spot we are letting families know that they are not alone, but that there are a number of organizations working together to provide them with support and services," said Dana Edgull from the Monterey County Health Department, Behavioral Health Division.

She further explained: “The needs of children and their families often cross multiple systems and communities need sustainable tools to integrate systems to meet those needs. Children’s Behavioral Health and the Department of Social and Employment Services serve many of the same families and in order for us to meet their needs it is vital for us to work together.”

Monterey County competed with entries submitted by mental health professionals and child advocates from across the country. All entries were peer-judged, and the criteria included consideration of planning, cultural competence/family involvement, message, execution, presentation, creativity, audience, effectiveness, and evaluation.

The ECCO Recognition Program is sponsored by the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Program for Children and Their Families of the Federal Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It celebrates the talents, strengths, and successes of communities that are part of a CMHS program to build community-based “systems of care” for children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families.

ECCOs were given in the following categories: Media Outreach; Community Outreach: Parents & Caregivers; Community Outreach: Children & Youth; Professional Outreach; Partnership Development; Communications Planning; Internal Communications; and local efforts conducted as part of National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day.

A system of care is not a program — it is a philosophy of how care should be delivered. It is an approach to services that recognizes the importance of family, school and community, and seeks to promote the full potential of every child and youth by addressing their physical, emotional, intellectual, cultural and social needs. In Monterey County organizations such as Children’s Behavioral Health, Department of Social and Employment Services, Probation and many community-based organizations, along with children, youth and their families make up the system of care.

Children and youth with serious mental health needs make substantial improvements at home, at school and in the community when served through systems of care that provide community-based services such as **Monterey County’s System of Care: La Familia Sana/the Healthy Family.**

For more information about Monterey County’s System of Care: La Familia Sana/The Healthy Family please visit: [www. MCSystemofcare.org](http://www.MCSystemofcare.org).

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