STATE OF CALIFORNIA--HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY

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July 15, 1997

DMH INFORMATION NOTICE NO.: 97-10

TO: LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM CHIEFS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
CHAIRPERSONS, LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH BOARDS

SUBJECT: BENEFICIARY PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCESSES - INPATIENT HOSPITAL SERVICES

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) recently conducted tests of the Oversight Protocol for the review of Mental Health Plans (MHPs) since the consolidation of Fee-For-Service Medi-Cal and Short/Doyle Medi-Cal inpatient hospital services. This protocol was designed to determine the MHP compliance with the California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Chapter 10, Medi-Cal Psychiatric Inpatient Hospital Services.

Although these tests were positive, the implementation of the beneficiary problem resolution process in several MHPs was deficient. Among the problems identified were as follows: failure to post the Problem Resolution Process; the mixing of grievances with special incident reports, making it difficult to distinguish one from the other; and failure to keep Grievance Logs. This notice is intended to remind each MHP of their responsibilities in this area.

Each MHP is required to have beneficiary problem resolution processes for both Short-Doyle/Medi-Cal and Fee-For-Service Medi-Cal hospitals, which include a complaint resolution process and a grievance process with two levels. In addition, the MHP must ensure that beneficiaries have adequate information about, and access to, these resolution processes. Each MHP must also provide for the recording of all grievances in a Grievance Log within one working day of the date of the receipt of the grievance. This Grievance Log is subject to review by DMH, the Department of Health Services and the federal oversight agency. Please be sure that your staff is aware of, and complies with, these responsibilities, as contained in California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Chapter 10, Article 5.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this process, please contact your regional Technical Assistance and Training liaison.

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Sincerely,

GARY M. PETTIGREW
Deputy Director
Systems of Care

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MENTAL HEALTH
Program Support Branch