

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
HENDERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

MEETING DATE: August 14, 2007

SUBJECT: Request to Establish a Clinical Social Worker (Mental Health Therapist) Full-Time Employee Position in Health Department

ATTACHMENTS: Proposed Salary and Fringe, plus Travel/Training Expenses

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: A bi-lingual Clinical Social Worker serving as a Mental Health Therapist has been working out of the Henderson County Department of Public Health for almost one year serving patients of the Health Department, and patients who need a bi-lingual therapist are also referred from various community health services providers through the Henderson County Community Health Network. This therapist has been made available to our community through a federal grant awarded to the Henderson County Partnership for Health, Inc. and implemented through the Henderson County Community Health Network (CHN), a collaborative project of the Henderson County Partnership for Health, Inc. MAHEC was contracted by the CHN to temporarily serve as a staffing agency to hire the Therapist and provide for her supervisory oversight as she seeks State Licensure. Licensure is also required to bill insurance for services. MAHEC often assists communities in getting integrated care started, but eventually spins these projects off to other entities for longer term support. MAHEC now asks release of its responsibility for the Therapist, and they want another agency to assume this role. The Therapist's services have been extremely timely and helpful to many of our citizens. There are few bi-lingual therapists serving Henderson County, nor are there therapists who can be so immediately available to health department clients and their families. The MH Therapist provides a critical link between primary medical care and mental health services and in this way assures the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable. The MH Therapist demonstrates the mobilization of community partnerships to identify and solve health problems. Her early availability can reduce further deterioration of a client's condition which left unresolved could result in higher cost interventions.

The Henderson County Department of Public Health currently has a vacant, unfunded Public Health Nurse position that originally provided nursing services funded by the Smart Start Program. This position could be re-designated to a Clinical Social Worker position. Our experience over the past year has shown that not all MH Therapist services currently being provided at the Health Department would be compensated since most clients have no insurance, nor do they have the ability to pay. Since there aren't enough insured clients to fully support this position full-time, County Mental Health Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds would be needed. However, any revenues that may be collected from billing for services could be used to offset the MOE funds.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

That the Health Department reclassifies an existing unfunded Public Health Nurse position to a full-time Clinical Social Worker (Mental Health Therapist) position and use the amount of County Mental Health Maintenance of Effort funds needed to cover cost for the position in order to serve citizens of Henderson County needing these services.

Suggested Motion:

I move that the Health Department reclassify an existing unfunded Public Health Nurse position to a full-time Clinical Social Worker (Mental Health Therapist) position and use the amount of County Mental Health Maintenance of Effort funds needed to cover cost for the position in order to serve citizens of Henderson County needing these services.

Clinical Social Worker

Salary starting 10/1/07	\$30,566.25
7.65% FICA	\$2,338.32
MEDICAL & DENTAL	\$ 5,235.75
5% LGERS	\$ 1,528.31
IT Equipment	\$ 1,500.00
Travel/Conferences	\$ 1,500.00
2% 401K	\$ 611.33
	<u>\$43,279.96</u>