



Legislation Text

File #: 18-566, **Version:** 1

Approve and present a plaque of appreciation honoring Rachel E. Ford, Consumer Affairs Liaison, upon her retirement from Health & Social Services, Behavioral Health Division with over 11 years of dedicated service to Solano County (Supervisor Brown)

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒
Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Health & Social Services recommends that the Board approve and present a plaque of appreciation honoring Rachel E. Ford, Consumer Affairs Liaison, upon her retirement from the Behavioral Health Division with over 11 years of dedicated service to Solano County.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Rachel Ford began her career in Solano County as a volunteer member of the Mental Health Advisory Board in 2005. In 2006, she continued in that role and began facilitating the Fairfield Bipolar Disorder Peer Support Group. On May 7, 2007, Ms. Ford was hired by Health and Social Services, Behavioral Health Division as a Consumer Affairs Liaison, bringing her personally lived experience in mental health into a full-time position. The position aligned with the implementation of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) programs and with the goal to promote system transformation by increasing the strength of the consumer voice in mental health systems. As a Consumer Affairs Liaison, Ms. Ford has worked with the County's seriously mentally ill residents and led change to ensure that they were well-served. When a peer was in need of urgent support, Ms. Ford would devote many hours to advocate for or assist this individual toward stability and mental health wellness and recovery.

Initially, the Consumer Affairs Liaison position was assigned to work under the Quality Improvement Unit where Ms. Ford facilitated the Bipolar Support Group and provided Peer Counseling with individuals diagnosed with serious mental illnesses. In 2009, Ms. Ford took on a second role as the Family Liaison due to that position becoming vacant. This dual role served her well since her personal experience also includes a family member role. In 2013, Ms. Ford's position was transferred to the Wellness Recovery Unit where she further expanded her trainings and educational events to internal and external behavioral health staff, peers and the community. This included developing a course curriculum designed to train peers to volunteer in the mental health system as new peer counselors. Ms. Ford also increased the number of weekly peer support groups offered from one to three times per week, creating the service in all three regions of the county (Vacaville, Fairfield, and Vallejo). These groups are now open to adults with any mental health issue or diagnosis. The support groups are currently co-facilitated by peer support specialists: eight peer volunteers who also do other individualized peer support, volunteer activities, and wellness events. This last year Ms. Ford was a key planner in a locally held Peer Forum that brought together peer counselors and advocates from 18 counties to develop a network of expertise to among peer leaders.

Ms. Ford is known for her passion for public service, the community we serve, and a deep commitment to quality services. Ms. Ford has interacted as an advocate across community and county agencies over her career in Solano County.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The costs associated with preparing the agenda item are nominal and absorbed by the Department's FY2018/19 Adopted Budget. The costs associated with preparation and purchase of the plaque are included in the Board's FY2018/19 Adopted Budget.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could choose not to approve this plaque of appreciation. This is not recommended as this is an opportunity to recognize Ms. Ford's dedication and contributions to Solano County.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

No other agencies are involved in this Board Item.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION