

Balancing the Behavioral Health Gap in California

Posted At : September 26, 2008 8:20 AM | Posted By : Kate Tussey

Related Categories: Health Care, State & Local, Procurement

California is in the midst of improving their behavioral health services, assembling the requirements for a Behavioral Health Electronic Health Record (BH-EHR) system that would allow for the exchange of client information according to a standards-based model of interoperability.

In November 2004 California passed Proposition 63, now known as the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), intended to provide resources to support the delivery of mental health services by California's fifty-eight County Mental Health Programs and to monitor their progress toward statewide mental health goals. To facilitate the improvement of behavioral health services, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), in collaboration with the County Mental Health Programs, has assembled the requirements for an Electronic Health Record (EHR) System. Each county is responsible for its own budget and project proposals to meet the individual needs of the clients in their respective communities.

The development of standards for each county is an ongoing process, leaving some counties more developed than others. DMH hopes to aid the process by releasing a Request for Information (RFI) for the California [BH-EHR](#) (member login required). The purpose of the RFI is to share business and functional requirements with vendors and to obtain information about each vendor's ability to deliver standards-based and interoperable behavioral health information systems in California. The RFI will assist in obtaining information from vendors to be shared with the County Mental Health Programs with the intent to aid County/Vendor compliance with requirements. There is no single statewide system.

The RFI includes the CA BH-EHR Functional Requirements Survey, outlining the functional requirements for each county's electronic health record system. California's roadmap for full integration estimates full functional EHR and Personal Health Record (PHR) systems in place for 2014. Two counties with Request for Proposals out include the [County of Los Angeles](#) (member login required) and [Merced County](#) (member login required).