

HRC, as you know it, is going away on July 1st, 2009

We currently serve just under 2,500 people with severe mental illness. On July 1st, that number will be cut to 700. That means that, odds are, you **will** be one of the people who will be denied services. If you do not have some kind of health insurance (private, Medicare, or Medi-Cal) your chances of being dropped from HRC are nearly 100%. Beyond that, the County has not given any guidelines as to who might stay and who might be eliminated. My guess is that, unless you have severe schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder, you should plan on finding another source of care.

If the County tells you that you are being referred to TCORE, APSS, Primary Care, or other County clinic, be afraid: those programs are currently staffed and funded for a few hundred patients, and the County is referring *thousands* to them. They're not giving those clinics a proportional increase in their budgets. Get in line early. *Very* early.

If the County tells you that your illness is so mild that it can be treated by your primary care doctor, be very afraid: most primary care clinics have a practice model that allocated about 7-10 minutes of face-to-face time with the doctor each visit. You should also be aware that your doctor *will not* get paid for treating your mental illness—the County diverts all the Medicare and Medi-Cal funding and won't reimburse non-County doctors. So you'll be asking your primary care doctor to spend scarce time and clinic resources to provide services that s/he isn't trained to provide, and to do it *for free*. Don't be surprised (and please be respectful of your doctor) if it doesn't happen.

If you have private insurance, Medicare, or Medi-Cal, you might try calling *The Effort*, a downtown clinic that has the unique ability to bill Medicare and Medi-Cal directly, before the County siphons off the money. They are an integrated clinic, providing both psychiatric and primary care, so don't approach them for mental health only: they want to be your "medical home." They'll also be overwhelmed, so call early. **www.theeffort.org 916-325-5556**

I have a web site where I will be posting information updates as they become available, especially if I hear of places where displaced RST patients can get follow-up care. You might want to check it periodically to see if there are updates: **www.sacdoc.org/news**

This letter, by the way, is my own effort to take care of my patients. It is *not* in any way an official document of HRC or Sacramento County.

Best of luck.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Risley MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron Risley MD