

## COUNTY SNAPSHOT – LAKE COUNTY

### CONTACTS

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**Other County Representative(s):**

N/A

**Public/Media Relations:**

N/A

**Primary/Behavioral Health Care Integration:**

N/A

### OVERVIEW

Method of Data Collection Utilized: In-Person Interview November 8, 2011

Lake County is located in north central California, north of the San Francisco Bay Area. It takes its name from Clear Lake, the dominant geographic feature in the county and the largest natural lake wholly within California (unlike Lake Tahoe which is partially in Nevada). The county seat is Lakeport.<sup>1</sup> Lake County's economy is based around tourism, agriculture and government, however is continually changing. Because of seasonal work and socio-economic issues, Lake County is a fairly inexpensive place to live.

The 2010 U.S. Census reported Lake County's population as 64,665, with a 10.9% population increase in the past decade. The racial makeup is: 80.5% White, 1.9% African American, 3.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.1% Asian, 0.2% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 4.7% reporting two or more races, 17.1% Hispanic or Latino, 74.1% White persons not Hispanic.<sup>2</sup>

**Strengths:**

The Lake County Mental Health Department has a cohesive, educated and knowledgeable staff which is highly focused on providing consumer services. In addition to mental health services, LCMH administers the local Alcohol and Other Drug program, and offers integrated care for co-occurring disorders. Collaborative efforts are strong within the community, and the Mental Health Department maintains good working relationships with local schools, tribal communities, as well as probation and children's services. Peer support is also a strong facet of the department, as evidenced by its success in reducing the need for hospitalization for mental health issues.

**Challenges:**

Community challenges include adult male gun ownership mixed with drinking problems or with driving, community members with difficult life situations such as inadequate housing and transportation, the lack of a NAMI chapter and the poverty level (which has improved but is still a significant factor) exacerbated by no lasting industry (mostly seasonal jobs). While there are many well-intentioned individuals concerned about mental health (MH) issues, challenges include a lack of cohesive understanding about MH (e.g., distinguishing between developmentally disabled and MH patients, not knowing how to react or what steps to take during MH crises,

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake\\_County,\\_California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_County,_California)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06033.html>

as well as a lacking the proper vernacular to describe various MH issues. Lake County Mental Health is a small department with limited resources. Marketing events are limited to local efforts such as participation in fairs and festivals. The department is not able to employ a marketing expert, which, in turn, makes it difficult to reach some members of the community who could benefit from services. There are also concerns about MH outreach straining services, which are focused on clients with the most serious conditions. LCMH is concerned about being able to deliver as promised in any marketing efforts.

Government Advocacy: Good working relationship between the Mental Health Department and local decision-making bodies.

Centralized Website(s): <http://lcmh.lakecountyca.gov>

Resource Directory: <http://lcmh.lakecountyca.gov>

Social Media Presence: NO, but this could be developed.

### CURRENT PEI MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Suicide Prevention: NO

Student Mental Health Initiative: NO

Stigma & Discrimination Reduction: NO

Other County Programs:

	Walks/Run	Events	Speaker's Bureau	Media Praise/Protest	Outreach	Trainings (e.g., ASIST or QPR)	Specific Events during Suicide or MH Awareness Week/Month	Other
Suicide Prevention								
Stigma Reduction		X	In devel.		X		X	

### CURRENT PEI OUTREACH EFFORTS

While the county has no official suicide prevention or stigma reduction programs, MH officials have been able to enact a few small initiatives. Peer support is important; there is a big push to bring people home from out-of-county placements. There is also an annual event called “The Remembrance Project” to memorialize those who have died in State hospital. The local memorial is held in Ukiah, as this was the location of Mendocino State Hospital.

Lake County Mental Health assists with funding the “Challenge Day” ([www.challengeday.org](http://www.challengeday.org)) team at a local high school. The event seems to be well received; this is the second year it has been held in Lake. The county utilizes this event to target those who have bullied (and been bullied) and provides them the opportunity to make amends with each other. The focus is on students making a difference in creating an emotionally safe environment in the schools.

In addition, Lake County recognizes May Is Mental Health Month with depression screenings, participation in community outreach such as health-fairs, community events, schools and MHSA outreach efforts.

## COUNTY CRISIS NUMBERS AND RESOURCES

Suicide Crisis Hotline: 800.900.2075

Mental Health Crisis Hotline: 800.900.2075

LCMH provides 24/7 access to crisis consultation and support through the required Medi-Cal access line. Calls are directed to the county clinics during the day and to outside responders at night. The service is largely focused on providing access to a skilled person to provide access to services for clients who are in crisis. They provide some supportive counseling, but it does not function as a true suicide hotline.

Crisis services are managed in collaboration with the two local emergency rooms and the law enforcement agencies (if needed for safety). “Next day” appointments are made for callers who need assistance with depression, but do not meet criteria for involuntary hospitalization. The county is currently working with a consortium of six North-Bay Area counties (Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino and Solano) to develop a mutual certified suicide hotline service through the Marin Family Services Agency.

## DIGITAL STORIES

NONE—There are no digital stories locally but watching videos online seems to be increasingly popular activity throughout the county. A local resource has posted some anti-DUI videos online but there are no local stories related to suicide prevention or stigma reduction.

## HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Michael Mbangalo (Mendocino Community Health – Lakeside Clinic)
- Miriam Pena (St. Helena Community Clinic, Clear Lake)
- Two federally funded rural health clinics, one additional clinic
- The Mental Health Department focuses on clients with the most serious mental health issues and, by mutual agreement, refers clients to the other clinics when the conditions may be able to be managed in a primary care setting. Clients are transferred/referred within the array of available services as appropriate.
- There is a new Veterans Administration clinic in Clearlake that provides treatment for psychiatric disorders such as depression and PTSD as well as primary care.
- The county will also refer veterans to a collaborative (Rob Penny in Lakeport 707.263.2384, Jessie Taylor in Clearlake 707.995.7200) that provides linkages to a variety of services available to local veterans.
- Tribal Health clinics in Lakeport are strong collaborators. The Circle of Native Minds Wellness Center (funded by MHSA) has recently opened in close proximity to the Tribal Health. Tribal Health and other providers have expressed interest in bringing services to the Wellness Center (Tribal Health contact is Merrill Featherstone, (707-263-8382).

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Lake County is credited with having the highest percentage per capita of veterans in California. Jim Brown is the county contact for Veterans Services (707.263.2384); Gloria Flaherty (707-279-0563) is a good contact regarding Lake County CBOs (Community Based Organizations); Carol Ford (707.995.2973) provides daily operational management of the Bridge Drop-in Center, which is a peer-run consumer support center that provides direct individual and social support to mental health clients in recovery. The drop-in center is located in Clearlake and there are plans to provide outreach and peer-support services in other areas of the county.

Periodic staff trainings are available for clinical and support staff regarding suicide prevention and crisis protocol but staff could benefit from additional training in cohesive or proactive approaches.

## SPECIFIC COUNTY NEEDS

Additional Language Needs: Spanish

Desired Outreach Materials:

TV Spots	Radio Spots	Printed Materials	Print Ads <sup>a</sup>	Billboard Ads	Bus Ads	Outreach Materials	Social Media	Website	Trainings	“How to” Manuals <sup>b</sup>
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

<sup>a</sup> E.g., magazines.

<sup>b</sup> E.g., how to reach out to the media, how to start a speaker’s bureau, etc.

Additional Information: Lake County would like to know what first responders would like to know. (This will be covered by questioning the stakeholder groups.)

County is interested in developing a NAMI chapter and is open to ideas from other counties as to how to get something started.

County has a strong interest in acquiring rural-county-specific resources designed to encourage people to talk to each other and to educate the general public about MH issues. For example, how to react to different neighbor-to-neighbor situations; information about how to work with distressed communities; materials targeted for the Native American community (especially youth) and teenagers (great amount of despair and depression in this group). Law enforcement training and messages that highlight seniors (because people come to Lake County to retire) would also be appreciated.