



Connie Beck, Director  
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

## news release

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April 6, 2017

### Mental Health team increases outreach to homeless

The Mobile Intervention & Services Team (MIST) is ramping up staffing to help more of Eureka's most vulnerable mentally ill homeless people.

The program has recently added a new member, Anna Anguiano, a mental health clinician with the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS). She is joining Eureka Police Department (EPD) officers Cory Crnich and Wayne Rabang on regular ride-a-long patrols, building relationships with people living without shelter and making plans to get them housed.

Currently, MIST has a running list of more than 20 homeless people it's working with. Half are on a "top 10" list based on frequency of contact with police. According to DHHS Supervising Mental Health Clinician Kelly Johnson, scouting Eureka's neighborhoods in search of their clients also allows MIST to stop and help other folks who may be experiencing difficulty.

"Cory is most familiar with the top 10," she added, noting that Old Town is Crnich's beat. "We're getting them the care that they need."

Joining Anguiano, Crnich and Rabang on MIST are Substance Abuse Counselor Jasmine Huffman, Mental Health Case Manager Bryan Spinaz, Community Health Outreach Worker Susan Badra as well as student intern Allison Bayne. Soon another clinician, case manager and two peer coaches will be added.

As the process has evolved since the team's creation two years ago, a MIST case manager works with the homeless to establish a plan which can include outpatient counseling, medication support, alcohol and other drug services, housing or shelter, and linkage to medical and nutrition services as appropriate. Mental Health staff assist the person, if necessary, to DHHS's Psychiatric Emergency Services or its hospital.

There have been several success stories. "A lot of the folks who have moved into housing in the last year had been homeless for 10 to 20 years," Johnson said. "These are the people who fell through the cracks, people who were deemed unhousable. They're in housing now."

The MIST expansion reflects an overall increase in training and awareness by local law enforcement about mental health issues. In January, 25 law enforcement officers from agencies across the county gathered for Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. The four-day training hosted experts from throughout California, and was created to help officers identify major mental health disorders and other disabilities so that they can de-escalate potential crises in the field. During the event, Rabang was presented with a CIT Officer of the Year award because of his work with people suffering mental health hardships.

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From left: Supervising Mental Health Clinician Kelly Johnson, Mental Health Case Manager Bryan Spinas, Mental Health Clinician Anna Anguiano, Student Intern Allison Bayne, Officer Cory Crnich, Community Health Outreach Worker Susan Badra, Captain Steve Watson and Officer Wayne Rabang.



From left: Officer Cory Crnich, Mental Health Clinician Anna Anguiano and Officer Wayne Rabang.