



C A L I F O R N I A D E P A R T M E N T O F

Mental Health

1600 9th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 654-3351

December 4, 1998

DMH LETTER NO.: 98-06

TO: LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM CHIEFS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
CHAIRPERSONS, MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARDS

SUBJECT: ACCESS TO HEALTHY FAMILIES PROGRAM DATA

EXPIRES: Retain Until Rescinded

This letter sets out the Department of Mental Health's (DMH) policy regarding the confidentiality of and accessibility to information obtained from applicants and enrollees of the Healthy Families Program (HFP), and/or from the HFP eligibility file and/or from HFP information accessible via the Medical Eligibility Data System (MEDS). The Department's policy has been established in accordance with federal and state laws governing the confidentiality of personal information. Access to the I-IFP eligibility file and the MEDS system is available only to county mental health providers.

All types of information, whether written or oral, concerning HFP applicants or enrollees made or kept by any public office or agency in connection with the administration of the HFP program shall be confidential and shall not be open to examination other than for purposes directly connected with the administration of the HFP program. Purposes directly connected with the administration of I-IFP encompass those administrative activities and responsibilities that the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board, State Department of Health Services, DMH, and their agents are required to engage in to ensure effective program operations. Such activities include but are not limited to program planning; establishing eligibility and methods of reimbursement; providing services for recipients; program monitoring, conducting, or assisting in an investigation; prosecution or civil or criminal proceedings related to the administration of the HFP program; and conducting or assisting in a legislative investigation or audit related to the administration of the HFP program.

Except to the extent permitted by federal law or regulation, information to be safeguarded about applicants or enrollees includes but is not limited to names and addressees, HFP services provided, social and economic conditions or circumstances, agency evaluation of personal

DMH LETTER NO.: 98-06

Page 2

information, and mental health data including diagnosis and past history of mental health related conditions or disability.

Any person who knowingly releases confidential information concerning applicants or enrollees of **HFP** for which federal funds is made available is guilty of a misdemeanor.

If you or your staff have further questions concerning this matter, please contact Nancy Mengebier, Managed Care Implementation, at (916) 654-3486 or (209) 722-6618.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gary M. Pettigrew".

GARY M. PETTIGREW
Deputy Director
Systems of Care

cc: Dennis **Gilliam**
Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board