EXHIBIT B

INNOVATION WORK PLAN
Description of Community Program Planning and Local Review Processes

County Name: **Merced County**
Work Plan Name: **Strengthening Families Expansion-BHC**

Instructions: Utilizing the following format please provide a brief description of the Community Program Planning and Local Review Processes that were conducted as part of this Annual Update.

1. Briefly describe the Community Program Planning Process for development of the Innovation Work Plan. It shall include the methods for obtaining stakeholder input. (suggested length – one-half page)

Merced County Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Ongoing Planning Council (Representative Stakeholder Group) developed a standard procedure for stakeholders to present project request. The Merced County Probation Department gave a presentation at the Ongoing Planning Council on November 17, 2011 to use Innovation funds for a Behavioral Health Court. The Ongoing Planning Council (OGPC) voted to approved the request to expand the current Strengthening Families Innovation Project to expand the Learning Model to the Behavioral Health Court. The main focus would be to strengthen youth and families in the community living with a mental health issue or youth at risk of a mental health issue. Since the beginning of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), Community stakeholder feedback identified priorities as follows:

Involvement in Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
It is crucial to focus on educating parents and/or guardians with children as early as infants to prevent them from entering the juvenile justice system. A special focus should be directed to the female population that is underserved.

Isolation
Isolation hinders the development of healthy personal relationships. With isolation mental health stigma increase. This is particularly challenging among ethnic populations, which are typically more isolated and underserved. It is important to provide services to prevent isolation , promote mental health and other socialization activities.

Institutionalization/Incarceration
If/when youth are institutionalized or incarcerated; it affects family members and friends as isolation occurs and progress in treatment goals and care is halted.

Inability to be in a Mainstream Environment
Ethnic populations are at a higher risk of not being in a mainstream environment.

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It is important to provide programs for Hispanic and Southeast Asian children to aid in cultural awareness and independent living skills before they “age out” of the foster care system.

2. Identify the stakeholder entities involved in the Community Program Planning Process.

The project was developed with the feedback from previous Community Planning Processes, the MHSA Ongoing Planning Council (OGPC) and the following stakeholders in the community:

Judge of the Superior Court, Juvenile Division, Merced County
Merced County District Attorney’s Office
Merced County Public Defenders Office Merced County Probation
Court Administrator
Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice Correctional Complex Mental Health Staff
Merced County Mental Health
Merced County MHSA Ongoing Planning Council
Community Mental Health Treatment Providers
Law Enforcement Officials
Victim Witness
Family members and advocates for youth with mental illness
Merced County City Schools

3. List the dates of the 30-day stakeholder review and public hearing. Attach substantive comments received during the stakeholder review and public hearing and responses to those comments. Indicate if none received.

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