

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS

ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

BOARD AGENDA # *B-3

Urgent

Routine

AGENDA DATE March 25, 2008

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES NO

4/5 Vote Required YES NO

(Information Attached)

SUBJECT:

Authorization for Behavioral Health and Recovery Services to Support Doina Vacalie, M.D.'s Application for An H-1B Visa (U.S. Work Permit)

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Authorize Behavioral Health and Recovery Services to support an application for an H-1B Visa (U.S. Work Permit) for Doina Vacalie, M.D.
2. Authorize Behavioral Health and Recovery Services to pay the required \$2,375 for the immigration and naturalization (INS) filing fees.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Appropriations to support the \$2,375 filing fees required by the employer for processing of the Federal H-1B Visa application are available within the Behavioral Health and Recovery Services budget. These costs are directly associated with the recruitment of physicians to work at Doctors Behavioral Health Center. Doctors Medical Center has agreed to reimburse Behavioral Health and Recovery Services for all recruitment and retention costs through their contract with Stanislaus County. There is no impact to the County General Fund.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2008-201

On motion of Supervisor Grover, Seconded by Supervisor DeMartini and approved by the following vote, Ayes: Supervisors: O'Brien, Grover, Monteith, DeMartini, and Chairman Mayfield. Noes: Supervisors: None. Excused or Absent: Supervisors: None. Abstaining: Supervisor: None.

- 1) X Approved as recommended
- 2) Denied
- 3) Approved as amended
- 4) Other:

MOTION:

Christine Ferraro

ATTEST: CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

File No.

DISCUSSION:

The H-1B visa (U.S. Work Permit) is a non-immigrant INS classification used by non-citizens who will be employed in a specialty occupation. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services requires employers to sponsor alien employees in their application of a U.S. Work Permit, including payment of an application filing fees of \$2,375. The U.S. Work Permit is non-transferable; it does not allow the employee to work for any other employer. Employees must be in a specialty occupation requiring at least a bachelor's degree to be eligible for sponsorship. Specialty occupations include engineering, physical sciences, law, medicine and health, among others. An employee may hold H-1B status for up to six years at a time. Should the employee choose to terminate the employment status, there is no obligation on the part of the individual to repay the employer for the application filing fees. The employee is responsible for paying all legal fees associated with obtaining the U.S. work Permit.

There exists an extreme shortage of trained psychiatrists to meet the needs of individuals needing mental health and drug and alcohol services throughout the State. Although this shortage is much less dramatic in urban areas, it has reached crisis proportions in the majority of the State. Over the past years, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services has been losing ground in its ability to recruit and retain psychiatrists despite very aggressive recruitment efforts. These efforts have been pursued alone and in collaboration with private physicians in the community who are also looking to recruit individuals to expand their practices. Our competitors in this arena are not only county governments, but also the state and federal governments. Behavioral Health and Recovery Services currently has four vacant positions for psychiatrists.

Doina Vacalie, M.D. is Board Certified in Psychiatry with experience in working with clients with a serious and persistent mental illness. Dr. Vacalie's specialized training included four years of Psychiatry Residency training in addition to four years of medical school. Board Certification in the specialty of psychiatry exemplifies her excellence in the field. Her experience includes employment as a Locum Tenens psychiatrist with Stanislaus Behavioral Health Center from September 2001 to June 2002. During her tenure, Dr. Vacalie demonstrated that she has the qualifications and potential for what Behavioral Health and Recovery Services requires in an employee. Her familiarity with procedures and policy of the Behavioral Health Center will make her a good addition to the organization.

Based on the extensive background and experience brought to the position by Dr. Vacalie, and the difficulty and expense to fill the position, the Behavioral Health and Recovery Services recommends supporting Dr. Vacalie's application for an H-1B Visa.

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POLICY ISSUE:

Approval of this request supports the Board's priorities of a healthy community and the efficient delivery of public services by providing a qualified practitioner of psychiatry to support the community needs for care.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Approval of this request will provide a qualified Psychiatrist to fill an existing vacant position.