



## Staff Briefing #65

February 16, 2005

### Rob Walton Appointed ADMHS Disaster Coordinator

The recent floods and tragic La Conchita mudslide remind us how vulnerable we are to natural disasters. When disaster strikes Santa Barbara County ADMHS has a critical role to play. We are responsible for providing **Critical Incident Stress Debriefings** for **first-responders** and assisting in coordinating **mental health treatment** for those individuals directly impacted by a disaster. The **ADMHS Disaster Coordinator** is charged with linking to the county disaster system and mobilizing the ADMHS mental health and alcohol and drug treatment resources that are needed during a local disaster. This is a state requirement that was articulated in the Realignment Act passed in the early 90's.

Since disaster response naturally ties into the Department's access and crisis services, I have appointed **Rob Walton**, R.N., M.P.A., QA-Access Program Manager, to serve as the Department's Disaster Coordinator. Access clinician **Andrew Vesper**, LCSW, will provide backup when Rob is unavailable. As Division Manager of QA-Access, Rob's daily work already spans all departmental units, and he has demonstrated a **keen knowledge** of the Department's resources. During the recent flooding, Rob coordinated our response with our neighboring county, **Ventura**, to see if there were youngsters in Carpinteria schools in need of intervention, and he offered ADMHS assistance as needed.

When a local disaster occurs, our services are vital to the **healing process** that a community often needs as people recover from the losses of life and property. We play a **key role** with our county partner agencies during community disasters.

If you have any questions about the ADMHS disaster response program, please contact Rob at 884-1637.

- James L. Broderick, Ph.D., Director