



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. **What is Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)?**

Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, was a voter initiative passed in 2004, which expanded California's public mental health programs and services through funding received by a one percent tax on incomes in excess of \$1 million. Counties use this funding for prevention and early intervention, community supports and services including "whatever it takes" treatment for serious mental illness, workforce development and training, innovation, plus capital facilities and technological needs through projects and programs.

2. **What problem was Prop 63 intending to address?**

At the time Prop 63 was created, mental health services in California were found to be inadequate for a rapidly growing number of people residing in the state. As such, many Californians living with mental illness found themselves in the criminal justice and judicial systems, or in emergency rooms.

3. **What is the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC)?**

The MHSOAC is a non-paid, 16-member Commission established by Prop 63 to provide oversight, accountability and leadership on

issues related to mental health in collaboration with clients, family members and unserved and underserved communities. The Commission holds regular public meetings focused on a variety of issues that impact the mental health field, including funding, client and family member involvement, cultural competency, eliminating disparities in services and outcomes, and evaluation of mental health programs. These meetings give many individuals throughout the state the opportunity to have their voices heard on mental health issues most important to them.

4. **What is the role of the MHSOAC in Prop 63?**

The Commission provides oversight and accountability of California's public mental health system, with particular attention to Prop 63. The MHSOAC is charged with ensuring that Prop 63 services are provided in accordance with recommended best practices subject to local and state oversight, as well as ensuring that the perspective and participation of individuals suffering from severe mental illness and their family members is a significant factor in all Commission decisions and recommendations. The MHSOAC is also responsible for developing strategies to overcome stigma and discrimination; increasing access

to services for unserved and underserved populations; and reducing the negative outcomes of untreated mental illness such as suicide, incarceration, homelessness, school failure, unemployment and prolonged suffering. Through ongoing evaluations, the Commission also strives to assure California taxpayers that Prop 63 is producing efficient outcomes. The MHSOAC reviews all county Prop 63 MHSA plans and updates; and approves Innovation programs.

5. What is the status of Prop 63 implementation?

To date, approximately \$8 billion in Prop 63 funding has been collected and continues to be distributed at the local level for expanded and enhanced mental health services and supports.

6. Has Prop 63 been successful?

The progress made in the public mental health system as a direct result of the one percent tax on incomes in excess of \$1 million continues to be seen. The taxpayer investment to help fund services for individuals seeking mental health treatment is paying off, not only for each client, but also for the communities in which they live. Mental health programs and services are now better tailored to meet the individual needs of the diverse clientele. In addition, the community is experiencing the benefits of these programs from the five MHSA Components which help mental health consumers and their families in their recovery and wellness.

The Prop 63 funded evaluation, conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), found positive outcomes associated with participation in Community Services and Supports (CSS) programs. The report shows substantial reductions in homelessness and acute psychiatric hospitalizations. The UCLA findings also showed participation in CSS programs is associated with reductions in arrests and incarcerations for most age groups.

One study showed reductions in homelessness of 82 percent for young adults and a 67 percent reduction for adults. Psychiatric hospitalizations or ‘mental health emergencies’ were reduced by 88 percent for children, 86 percent for young adults, and 90 percent for adults. Reductions were also seen in arrests: 74 percent for adults, 78 percent for young adults, and 98 percent for older adults. Overall, the evaluation found that participation in CSS programs is associated with reductions in incarcerations and arrests – the results are very promising.

7. How is the economy impacting mental health funding?

Our communities are facing extraordinary fiscal challenges right now. Prop 63 provides an opportunity for counties to continue to make available those services and supports to mental health clients most in need. A local “prudent reserve” has been established, as required by Prop 63.

8. What are MHSOAC's future plans?

As time progresses, the Commission will continue its focus on oversight and accountability of Prop 63 funding, while also performing a statewide evaluation

of Prop 63 related programs and funding uses to measure their effectiveness, impacts on the mental health system, and the effects programs are having on clients and family members who use Prop 63 services.