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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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California Mental Health Commission to Consider Funding to Prevent or Reduce the Negative Impacts of Severe Mental Illness

On July 24, 2008, the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) will consider whether to authorize Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds for Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs in Mono and Monterey counties. The MHSOAC will consider authorizing \$200,000 for Mono County and over \$3.6 million for Monterey County. These MHSA funds are the first PEI dollars to go out to California counties.

PEI is the MHSA program that has the goal of transforming the mental health system from “fail first” to “help first”. According to MHSOAC Chair Linford Gayle, “These PEI plans will help counties to be better prepared to offer the ‘right care, at the right time, in the right place’.” “Counties will be more fully prepared to do ‘whatever it takes’ to reduce the negative impacts of severe mental illness.”

In 2004, The Mental Health Services Act was approved by California voters as Proposition 63 to provide for increased mental health services in California. A Field Poll released in June shows 73% - or 7 in 10 - of California voters surveyed oppose cuts in mental health services to balance the state budget.

MHSOAC Vice Chair Andrew Poat said, “The PEI program was designed to save Californians millions of dollars by lowering use of emergency services, keeping kids in school, and increasing job retention.”

The MHSOAC will meet on Thursday, July 24th, at the Doubletree Hotel in Sacramento. The hotel is located at 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento, CA 95815. The meeting will begin at 9:00 am; the consideration of the PEI funds is on the agenda at approximately 10:00 am.

This MHSOAC meeting is part of the Commission’s meetings around the state to conduct business where the public can have access to the Commission and where the Commission can bring information regarding mental health oversight and accountability to the public.

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