



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 24, 2009**

**California Mental Health Commission Authorizes Funding for the City of Berkeley, Calaveras, Lassen, San Francisco, and Yolo Counties to Prevent or Reduce the Impact of Mental Illness**

Today, the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) authorized Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds for Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs in the City of Berkeley, Calaveras, Lassen, San Francisco, and Yolo Counties. The MHSOAC authorized \$966,700 for the City of Berkeley, and \$291,000 for Calaveras County, \$156,600 for Lassen County, \$6,434,374 for San Francisco County, and \$1,439,700 for Yolo County.

MHSOAC Chair Andrew Poat said, "Prevention and Early Intervention programs will transform the mental health system. We will stop requiring consumers to "fail first" before receiving services and we will move to a "help first" system." Mr. Poat said, "Prevention and Early Intervention programs are a new approach to mental health in California. This program is a win for both mental health consumers and taxpayers."

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

Mr. Poat said, "Our prevention programs will decrease expensive emergency room visits as we provide prevention services to consumers of mental health services." "Prevention and Early Intervention funds will keep kids in school, keep families together, and will avoid long term unemployment," said Mr. Poat.

The MHSOAC met on Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, at the California Institute for Mental Health building in Downtown Sacramento.

This MHSOAC meeting is one of many Commission meetings that take place around the state. The intent of these meetings is 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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