



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**October 29, 2010**

**State Mental Health Commission Chooses Larry Poaster of Modesto as New Chair and Richard Van Horn of Los Angeles as Vice Chair**

After brief discussion at yesterday's Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) meeting in Long Beach, the California commission responsible for mental health services oversight chose a new Chair and Vice Chair. Larry Poaster, PhD, of Modesto was elected Chair and Richard Van Horn of Los Angeles was elected Vice Chair. The new leadership team was selected by unanimous votes.

MHSOAC Chair-Elect, Dr. Larry Poaster, has been a member of the Commission for over 3 years as a mental health professional and previously served as the Vice Chair for the MHSOAC. Dr. Poaster has an extensive background in health care and behavioral health. He served as a private consultant to government agencies in the field of health care delivery by public entities since 2002 and previously served as the Director of Behavioral Health Services for the Stanislaus County Department of Behavioral Health Services from 1980 to 2002. Dr. Poaster was also the Director of Clinical Services for that department from 1970 to 1980 and served as President of the California Conference of Mental Health Directors, twice president of the California Mental Health Directors Association, and president of the Board of Directors of the California Institute of Mental Health.

MHSOAC Vice-Elect, Chair Richard Van Horn of Los Angeles, also brings a great deal of knowledge and experience to the Commission, serving as President and Chief Executive Officer of Mental Health America, Los Angeles (MHALA) for nearly 30 years. Van Horn currently serves MHALA as President Emeritus. He is also a member of the board for the California Institute for Mental Health, the California Council Community Mental Health Agencies, and the National Council for Community Behavioral Health (NCCBH). Van Horn is also a current member of the National Board of Directors of Mental Health America and serves as Vice Chair for its Executive Committee. On behalf of Mental Health America, Mr. Van Horn has testified before the Congress of the United States regarding issues affecting people with mental illnesses. He also served for 6 months as principal consultant for the new MHSOAC in 2005. Van Horn fills the seat of designee of the State of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The 16-member MHSOAC was formed by the passage of Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), in November 2004. The MHSOAC is responsible for overarching oversight and accountability for implementation of the MHSA.

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