



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**California Mental Health Commission Approval of Funds Results in a  
Statewide Total of \$713.7 million for Prevention Programs to Promote  
Mental Health**

Today, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) approved \$415,800 for Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs in Del Norte County to promote mental health and prevent the negative consequences of mental illness. The MHSOAC has now approved a total of over \$713.7 million in PEI funds, including funds for all 58 California counties, through fiscal year 2010-11. This achievement is funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) (Proposition 63), the November 2004 voter initiative that placed a 1% tax on incomes above \$1 million.

The MHSA reserves 20% of MHSA funds for prevention and early intervention programs. MHSOAC Chair Andrew Poat said, "Our Prop 63 Commission is thrilled to have achieved a major goal with the approval of a total of \$713.7 million in prevention funds for mental health services in California." "This unprecedented, historic investment will help prevent unnecessary suffering by those experiencing mental health challenges," said Poat.

Before the MHSA, California public mental health services were limited to treatment, usually medication, for people with serious mental illness. Many of these individuals have ended up in emergency rooms, jails, and self-medicating on the streets. The MHSA prevention programs promote "help first" rather than "fail first" mental health treatment.

Nearly half the population will suffer a mental health and/or substance-use disorder during their lifetime, 26-30% will experience a mental disorder in any given year, and about 6% will face a mental disorder so serious that it impairs their ability to perform everyday activities for an average of three months.

MHSOAC Chair Poat said, "The more we do to prevent mental illness, the more we will keep people at school, at work, and out of the hospital, and out of jail." "We will promote wellness and avoid high costs in suffering to individuals and reduce expenditures from the public purse," said Poat.

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

The MHSOAC met on Thursday, November 19th, at the Sheraton Suites Hotel in San Diego.

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