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**Over \$6 Million in Prop 63 Funds Approved for Lake, Mendocino, Mono, and San Bernardino Counties for Mental Health Services**

Today, a total of \$6,228,209 was approved by the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) for mental health services in Lake, Mendocino, Mono, and San Bernardino Counties. \$410,000 was approved for Lake County and \$187,409 was approved for Mendocino County in Prevention and Early Intervention funds. \$24,000 was approved for Mono County and \$5,606,800 was approved for San Bernardino County in Innovation funds.

The California MHSOAC is a 16-member commission charged with the oversight of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The MHSA was approved by California voters in 2004 as Proposition 63 to provide for expanded mental health services in California.

The funds approved by the MHSOAC for Innovation (INN) purposes will help fund county mental health programs that are novel, creative, and ingenious in their mental health approaches. These programs are also developed within communities in ways that are inclusive and representative. MHSOAC Chair Andrew Poat said, "Innovation funds will help to jump start our thinking about how to improve our mental health programs."

Mono County will be using their Innovation funds for their Peapod Innovation Program. This program will test a different approach to increase the effectiveness of support groups in English and Spanish for diverse new parents countywide. San Bernardino County plans on using their Innovation funds, for four different programs. One of these programs, the Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation Program (CASE), will develop a model of comprehensive and collaborative care that facilitates a safe haven and clinical rehabilitation for exploited children who are drawn into prostitution.

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funds are approved for programs that apply strategies focused on preventing mental illness from becoming severe and disabling. 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."

Lake County plans on using their PEI funds for eight prevention and early intervention projects. Project 2 will provide one-on-one attention to children who may be facing personal and social adjustment issues. Mendocino County will use their PEI funds for four projects. Mendocino's Project 3 expands existing services to include isolated American Indians and Latinos. This project uses culturally appropriate senior peers who have established relationships in these communities.

"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," said Mr. Poat. "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," said Poat.

The MHSOAC met on Thursday, February 25 at the California Institute for Mental Health 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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