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Contact: Jennifer Whitney

916-445-8721

## CALIFORNIA'S PROP 63 BREAKS NEW GROUND IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Sacramento, CA—From creating a centralized place for veterans with PTSD to teaching transition age youth how to reach out to their peers in crisis, counties around the state are changing the landscape of mental health services, according to a new report issued by the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission.

The programs are funded by Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, which voters approved in 2005 assessing a one percent tax on personal income above \$1 million to fund community mental health. Approximately five percent of that fund is designated for Innovation: programs that are novel, creative or ingenious, previously untested methods to engage those who are disconnected or unserved but need mental health treatment. "These are time-limited pilots," says Larry Poaster, Chair of the Commission. "They're designed to test solutions to urgent mental health problems for which there are no established practices in the county."

The just-released Innovative Trends report shows that these programs are targeting a wide range of ages and populations and their focuses are equally broad.

In Orange County, for example, the Vet Connect program allows veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and severe depression—including those with substance abuse issues—to seek treatment in one place. The program will use a network of providers and volunteers trained on military culture and resources; for veterans who are too fragile to navigate the VA system, this could give them the treatment they might otherwise not receive.

In Santa Clara County, a new program designed for transition-age youth (TAY) will be run by their peers. The outcome of this program is two-fold: it allows for leadership development in the 16-24 year old TAY who will be running the program while reaching out to the TAY who are homeless, in crisis and either experiencing or at risk of experiencing mental health issues.

A number of counties are testing new approaches to address the needs of individuals with mental illness who are homeless. There's a reason for that: according to a SAMHSA study, up to 25 percent of individuals who are homeless in the United States have a severe mental illness.

A program in Los Angeles County will work specifically to find permanent supportive housing for not only individuals with mental illness who are homeless but their families as well. The effort doesn't end there; mental health services will continue even after they're in their permanent homes.

For these same individuals in Butte County, the Homeless Shelter Collaboration project has been developed. It will provide shelter in addition to mental health, medical and financial services. The collaboration is an effort to meet the needs of clients more seamlessly and allow them to have lives not dominated by their mental illness.

For all of these Innovation programs, the goal is the same: to find new ways to redesign older approaches to mental health that allow recovery, wellness and resilience through community partnerships.

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The role of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) is to oversee the implementation of Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The MHSOAC is also responsible for developing strategies to overcome stigma. For more information, please contact Jennifer Whitney at 916-445-8721.