

**For Immediate Release
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**NEW COMMISSIONER FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OVERSIGHT &
ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION**

Sacramento—The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission is pleased to announce the appointment of new commissioner Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal (D-Long Beach). Ms. Lowenthal has a background as a licensed family counselor and mental health consultant, having received her Master's degree from Cal State Long Beach. Lowenthal is chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee and serves on the Assembly Health Committee. She has made the improvement of mental health services a legislative priority in the Assembly, including authoring AB 739: Mental Health Curriculum, which would require the State Board of Education to include suicide prevention instruction as part of health education for grades 7 through 12.

The MHSOAC exists to oversee the implementation of Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, which California voters approved in 2004. Prop 63 levies a one percent tax on incomes above a million dollars. The money generated from Prop 63 funds public mental health programs throughout the state, including programs and strategies to overcome stigma.

The Commission consists of 16 members: the Attorney General or his/her designee; the Superintendent of Public Instruction or his/her designee; the Chairperson of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee or another member of the Senate selected by the President pro Tempore of the Senate; the Chairperson of the Assembly Health Committee or another member of the Assembly selected by the Speaker of the Assembly. This last category is being filled by Assemblymember Lowenthal. The Commission also includes the following Governor appointees: two persons with a severe mental illness; a family member of an adult or senior with a severe mental illness; a family member of a child who has or has had a severe mental illness; a physician specializing in alcohol and drug treatment; a mental health professional; a county sheriff; a superintendent of a school district; a representative of a labor organization; a representative of an employer with less than 500 employees; a representative of an employer with more than 500 employees; and a representative of a health care services plan or insurer.

Commission priorities for 2013 include ensuring evaluation regarding the effectiveness of mental health services; exercising financial oversight over Proposition 63 to ensure compliance with statutes and regulations; reporting to the Administration and the

legislature any assessment, concerns or recommendations; and continuing efforts to develop strategies that overcome stigma and discrimination.

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