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Jennifer Whitney  
916-445-8721

## **STUDY SHOWS PROP 63 MENTAL HEALTH PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS ARE WORKING**

**Sacramento**—Hundreds of thousands of Californians at risk of or with early symptoms of mental illness are being helped by Proposition 63’s Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs, according to a recent UCLA report.

The July 2014 study, done by the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, shows that children, youth, young adults and the elderly are experiencing reduced homelessness, school drop out rates and unemployment through PEI programs.

Prevention in mental health involves reducing risk factors or stressors, building protective factors and skills, and increasing support. Early Intervention is directed toward those for whom a short, relatively low-intensity intervention is used to improve mental health and avoid the need for more extensive treatment.

The study evaluated three groups: Children and youth showing emotional disturbance from trauma; youth, transition-age-youth and young adults with early symptoms of or first onset of psychosis; and older adults in the early stage of depression.

For children and youth with emotional disturbance from trauma, the PEI programs showed “promising evidence of preventing mental illness from becoming more severe” through improved functioning.

In youth, transition-age-youth and young adults showing early symptoms, the PEI programs likely helped prevent mental illness from becoming more severe. There were also fewer arrests and some evidence that fewer people were unemployed, homeless or dropped out of school.

Finally, in older adults experiencing early onset of depression, the PEI programs likely helped prevent mental illness from becoming more severe. Participants showed significant reductions in suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

“Depression in older adults is very common and often the symptoms are not as easily identified as they are in younger people,” said Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission Chair, Richard Van Horn. “And even more importantly, knowing that these programs are helping people across the age spectrum is what Prop 63 intended to do and now we see it’s working.”

The study was commissioned by the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission. The Commission’s role is to oversee Prop 63, the Mental Health Services Act, which voters approved in 2004. Prop 63 places a one percent tax on incomes above a million dollars. The money helps fund approximately 1500 public mental health programs in California.

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