



## Prop. 63 changes bring more accountability ON MENTAL HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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Eight years after voters approved [Proposition 63](#) in 2004, the Mental Health Services Act has provided nearly \$1 billion annually for essential mental health services, including prevention and early intervention services, suicide prevention, supportive housing and treatment services.

Consumers, family members and local communities are actively engaged in transforming their local mental health systems. As a result of the act, California's community-based public mental health system is undergoing significant evolution.

Local and state government responsibilities are being realigned, bringing near-term opportunities to expand behavioral health coverage under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

As we go through such dynamic changes, there's the need to fine tune the act to strengthen and clarify local responsibility, invigorate the role of the independent [Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission](#), and establish a partnership for better evaluation of what works and what does not.

During the recent budget process, I have done just that. The legislation reflected a balanced approach for dollars to be directed to mental health services as directed by the voters. It ensures a local-state partnership that maintains the integrity of the act, and it continues a focus on empowering consumers.

It provides authority at a county level to approve three-year plans with annual updates for Mental Health Services Act-related mental health services, robust local stakeholder involvement, oversight and accountability of the local mental health directors and county auditor controllers, and the participation of existing local mental health boards.

This partnership is designed to streamline expenditures and ensure that dollars are directed to needed local services and supports. Previously, the state made these determinations and it had previously required more administrative overhead. This will no longer be the case.

The changes invigorate and strengthen the role of the independent Mental Health Services Oversight Commission so services and expenditures are reviewed by an independent entity.

My legislation requires the state to have performance-based contracts, through which the state can focus on key outcomes associated with the delivery of mental health services and most importantly, on consumer outcomes.

And it requires the [California Secretary of Health and Human Services](#) to work with constituency groups, the commission, and state departments to design a comprehensive evaluation plan with milestones and timelines. This facilitates accountability at all levels.

Proposition 63 and the Mental Health Services Act remain as a cornerstone of the public mental health system in California. I believe in it as strongly now as when I first authored the proposition. My priority is to continue protecting its integrity, making sure that the funds are used as effectively as possible to benefit the people of California who need mental health assistance.