



For immediate release
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No Compliance Problems Found with Mental Health Services Act Programs Recently Highlighted in the Media

Sacramento, CA— A comprehensive review by the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) found no compliance problems in the 13 Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) programs recently highlighted in the media. These findings were released today at an Informational Meeting in Sacramento.

The MHSOAC report found that the program descriptions generally did not address the extent of the program's purpose linked to mental health outcomes, omitted details about programs' mental health interventions and did not differentiate between Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs and Innovation (INN) programs. Prevention and Early Intervention programs are ongoing services designed to bring about mental health outcomes; Innovation programs are time-limited pilots and evaluations of unproven new or changed mental health practices.

The budget amounts mentioned in media reports were, in some cases, reported as annual amounts although were actually for more years than referenced in the articles. Also, some reported budgets actually funded more programs than were referenced in the articles.

In doing the review, MHSOAC staff looked at the statutory purpose and intent of the MHSA, requirements for PEI and INN programs, and trends identified in the counties' PEI and INN programs. In addition, MHSOAC staff communicated directly with the counties in learning more about the specific programs that had been identified, including program elements, implementation and costs and then validated that the programs comply with MHSA statutes and guidelines.

"In all of the programs highlighted by the media, we found reporting errors or omissions in every single one," said Dr. Larry Poaster, Chair of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission.

In all, eight of the programs in media reports were PEI programs and five were INN programs; PEI funds for the eight programs reported are less than 1% of total PEI funds distributed and INN funds were 4% of total INN funds distributed. In all, there are 485 PEI and 86 INN programs funded through MHSA.

"Although these programs mentioned in the media represent a fraction of PEI and INN that have been approved, the OAC takes seriously any allegations that the use of MHSA money is being inconsistent with law and approved guidelines," said Poaster.

Of the 13 programs, eight focus on services to people from diverse, underserved racial, ethnic and cultural groups. One of the priorities of the MHSA is to expand mental health services to underserved populations.

Proposition 63, also known as the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), was passed by voters in 2004 and was designed to expand mental health services in California. It places a 1% tax on incomes above a million dollars and has generated more than \$8 billion dollars for mental health services in California since 2005.