



California Black Women's Health Project

*"Committed to improving the health of
Black women and girls in California"*

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October 14, 2009

Andrew Poat
Chairman
Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
1300 17th Street, Suite 1000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: MHSAOC October Meeting – Public Comment at MHSAOC Meetings

Dear Chairman Poat,

As an avid supporter of the Mental Health Services Oversight Accountability Commission, the California Black Women's Health Project would like to address two (2) issues. First, we do not support the reduction of time from three (3) minutes to two (2) minutes for community members to speak. By your own admission, in a survey done by the OAC staff, five (5) of nine (9) similar committees allow at least three (3) to five (5) minutes per person (per line item). It is our opinion that you should increase the time for communal discussion and not limit it.

Second, we would like to address the practice of placing the general public comment time at the very end of the Commission meetings. Sometimes Commissioners leave before or during this time, which send a strong message to stakeholders that their concerns are not important enough to be heard. This is a problem because it could definitely breed discord among the community and eventually lead to a lack of support. It has been suggested that there be two (2) general public comment periods during the commission meeting where the public can speak. We are in support of this proposal.

Again, we are supporters of the MHSAOC. We simply want your process to be as inclusive and effective as possible.

Sincerely,

Erica Harris
Project Coordinator

~~13-03392-91703 ARW~~

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