



Executive Order B-06-11 In-State Travel Freeze Analysis and Implementation Recommendations

Issue

Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. issued Executive Order B-06-11 on April 26, 2011 that imposed a statewide travel freeze. The Commission needs to determine how to apply this Executive Order to Commission operations.

Background

Executive Order B-06-11

On April 26, 2011, Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor of the State of California, issued Executive Order B-06-11, prohibiting discretionary travel. The stated purpose of this order is to help achieve the \$413 million reduction in state operation efficiencies that is proposed in the Governor's 2011/12 budget.

This order, which was effective immediately and has no stated end date, requires that all in-state non-discretionary travel be approved by Agency Secretaries or Department Directors who do not report to an Agency Secretary.

The order further defines acceptable in-state mission-critical travel as travel that is directly related to:

- Enforcement responsibilities
- Auditing
- Revenue collection
- A job function required by statute, contract or executive directive
- Job-required training necessary to maintain licensure or similar standards required for holding a position

Mission critical travel does not include the following:

- Conferences
- Networking opportunities
- Professional development courses
- Continuing education classes and seminars

- Non-essential meetings that can be conducted by phone or video-conference
- Events for the sole purpose of making a presentation unless approved by the Department Director

Statutory Requirements

The following California Welfare and Institution Code Sections contain statutory requirements that have historically been interpreted by the MHSOAC to necessitate in-state travel for Commission staff and stakeholders:

California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5845(d):

In carrying out its duties and responsibilities, the commission may do all of the following:

- (1) Meet at least once each quarter at any time and location convenient to the public as it may deem appropriate. All meetings of the commission shall be open to the public.

California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5846(c):

The commission shall ensure that the perspective and participation of members and others suffering from severe mental illness and their family members is a significant factor in all of its decisions and recommendations.

Meeting Schedule

The MHSOAC currently conducts three categories of meetings that necessitate travel: Commission meetings (in Sacramento and out-of-town), committee meetings, and quarterly community forums (throughout the State).

During 2010, both Commission and the committees met every month. In an effort to reduce spending and due to work load issues Chair-elect Poaster proposed at the November 18, 2010 meeting, that the Commission meet every other month during 2011. The Commission adopted the motion at the December 14, 2010 Teleconference and began meeting face-to-face bi-monthly. During the months in which the Commission does not meet, a teleconference is scheduled, if necessary. In addition to reducing the Commission Meetings, the MHSOAC Committees began meeting on the off months of the Commission Meetings and began meeting bi-monthly in February 2011. The MHSOAC has significantly reduced its spending for travel since January 2011.

Implementation Options

MHSOAC staff have identified three options that the Commission may consider for implementation of Executive Order B-06-11 for the remainder of the 2011 calendar year. These options are:

Option One

Continue to have Commission meetings, committee meetings, and community forums, including out-of-town meetings, as scheduled.

Pros

- All timelines as established by the Commission and Committees will remain intact
- Stakeholder participation and input will not be impacted
- Out-of-town meetings will increase the diversity of stakeholder participation
- The Commission's statutory mandates will be met

Cons

- Fails to adequately implement the Governor's Executive Order
- May be perceived poorly by the public in the current fiscal climate
- Exceeds the statutory minimum required of the Commission

Option Two

Cease all travel, cancel the community forums, and conduct all meetings via-teleconference.

Pros

- Achieves the greatest cost savings of any option
- Strongly implements the Executive Order

Cons

- Teleconference meetings do not provide an opportunity for full stakeholder participation
- Commission and committee work will be negatively impacted
- Does not meet the statutory minimums as required of the Commission, specifically, teleconference calls do not ensure that the perspective and participation of members and others suffering from severe mental illness and their family members is a significant factor in all of its decisions and recommendations.

Option Three

Commission Meetings - In-person Commission meetings that require travel will be held in Sacramento in July, and October or November, which will be once each quarter as described in California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5845(d)(1). The remaining Commission meetings will be conducted via-teleconference and all out-of-town Commission meetings will be suspended.

Committee Meetings - In-person committee meetings will be held in Sacramento in June and October. The Evaluation Committee will have an additional in-person meeting in August due to the critical and urgent nature of their work, specifically the \$1 million in unexpended evaluation contract dollars for Fiscal Year 2011/12. The remaining committee meetings will be conducted via-teleconference and all out-of-town committee meetings will be suspended. Charters will be renegotiated if necessary.

Community Forums – All community forums will be suspended until the in-state travel freeze is lifted. MHSOAC staff will explore alternative means for interaction with the community in the interim. Possible options are to post community forum goals and questions on the MHSOAC website for public response or conduct a webinar. A report exploring alternative methods to engage the community will be presented at the July 2011 Commission meeting.

Pros

- Implements the Executive Order while still fulfilling statutory mandates
- Allows for stakeholder input
- Less impact on Commission and Committees than a complete suspension of travel
- Encourages the develop of more cost effective and potentially more successful means of community engagement than community forums

Cons

- Will likely slow the progress of Committees and may require a renegotiation of charters
- Greatly limits the participation of stakeholders and community members outside of the Sacramento and surrounding regions

Staff Recommendation

MHSOAC staff recommends that the Commission adopt option three for implementation of Executive Order B-06-11. This enforces the Executive Order while ensuring that the statutory mandates of the Commission are met.