



Proposed BHS Act Reduces Mental Health Services

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CCMH Urges the State to Maintain Critical Mental Health Services

The CA Coalition for Mental Health (CCMH) urges Governor Newsom, CA Health and Human Services and the California Legislature to ensure that the proposed Behavioral Health Services Act (BHS Act) does not reduce critical programming for outpatient services, crisis response, prevention services and outreach. All of these mental health programs could be reduced according to recent reports from California's Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO).¹

Reducing outpatient services, crisis response, prevention services, and outreach impacts historically unserved and underserved populations and all Californians. The financial and social costs are high when access to services and outreach are reduced, leading to increased crisis care, hospitalization, incarceration, homelessness and suicides². This reduction will be felt throughout California, and will especially be felt by children and youth, older adults and historically unserved and underserved populations (ethnic, culture, race, LGBTQ+). It will also reduce and possibly eliminate ongoing local Mental Health Services Act funding for organizations that provide Community Defined Evidence Practices (CDEPs) that are key to reaching diverse populations³.

Required data and analysis is currently not available to inform decisions. CCMH appreciates that the proposed BHS Act includes provisions to standardize performance outcome data. This will allow the State and local communities to better identify and bring to scale successful programs, and improve or reduce underperforming programs. However, standardized reporting and data is currently not in place. Since the enactment of the Mental Health Services Act (through Proposition 63 in 2004), the State has failed to standardize performance outcome data related to Mental Health Services Act programs. The State, therefore, does not have required data to inform decisions that could potentially cut mental health services.

¹ [Analysis of the Governor's Behavioral Health Modernization Proposal](#), July 2023, CA LAO

² [Estimating The Impact of Reduced Mental Health Services Act Funding On Suicide Deaths](#), 2022 Study, CalMHSA

³ [The California Reducing Disparities Project Phase 2 Statewide Evaluation Report](#), June 2023, Loyola Marymount University Psychology Applied Research Center

CCMH recognizes that leveraging federal dollars increases overall local funding. Increased leveraging would allow us to expand local dollars, and therefore incorporate additional areas of spending that include increasing supportive housing and substance use services along with ongoing mental health services. Yet, California is still in the early stages of understanding successful models by which small community-based organizations and counties can demonstrate success with braiding in sources of federal funding. At this point in time, the proposed BHSA **percentage buckets that hinge on increased federal matching could result in reduced providers, and reduced mental health services.**

CCMH urges careful review and amendments to sustain and increase timely, accessible, culturally relevant and integrated behavioral health care for all Californians through [SB 326](#) (Eggman), and the related BHSA ballot initiative. It is imperative that Californians are given a choice to vote for increased, *not decreased*, behavioral health care.

About CCMH

www.californiamentalhealth.org

CCMH is a diverse, broad-based coalition of statewide associations and organizations who seek to improve the delivery of mental health care in California, with a focus on creating better access to care and assuring parity in the delivery of mental health services that is on par with other health care services.

CCMH coalesced around Proposition 63 in 2004, the landmark initiative that significantly bolstered funding of mental health programs through a one-percent tax on individual income over \$1 million. One of our core commitments is to ensure adequate funding for mental health programs and care.

Historically, mental health programs are among the first to be cut when California faces economic challenges. This trend leads to a chronically underfunded system; CCMH seeks to safeguard mental health care funding and to support budget decisions that strengthen the delivery of mental health services throughout California.