

## County Behavioral Health Directors Thank State Leaders for Budget that Invests in Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment Access

*This budget makes a strong commitment to counties and the behavioral health consumers they serve. We look forward to further support for housing, crisis service access, and children's services.*

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SACRAMENTO, CA – “We applaud the Legislature and Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. for a budget that invests in children’s mental health, services for people experiencing mental health emergencies, and readies California to expand access to substance use disorder treatment,” said Kirsten Barlow, the Executive Director of the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA).

“With the Governor’s signing of the Budget Act on June 27 and the public health trailer bill AB 114 yesterday, county behavioral health directors are very pleased and appreciate the wide-ranging support their budget priorities have received from legislators and the Brown Administration this year,” continued Barlow.

CBHDA’s advocacy priorities that are funded in the California 2017 Budget Act and budget bills include:

- Continued support for children’s access to health care, including \$280 million to keep over 185,000 undocumented children enrolled in Medi-Cal, and \$28 million to build new crisis centers around the state to serve children and adolescents experiencing mental health emergencies;
- Investing over \$141 million in new funding to expand access to substance use disorder treatment through California’s new Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System pilot programs;
- Re-investing over \$100 million in county Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63 of 2004) funds that would have otherwise been reverted (expired), for which local residents will help set the mental health spending priorities;
- Extending until year 2020 counties’ authority to complete local “SB 82” capital projects currently underway that will bring new crisis intervention, stabilization, and residential treatment services to residents. These projects provide important alternatives to our law enforcement and hospital partners;
- Placing a freeze on the rates counties pay for certain skilled nursing home services (“Institutions for Mental Disease”) for people with acute mental health needs. This is an important mitigation to help county mental health service budgets cope with the loss of

an estimated \$100 million over the next 5 years to help cover counties' growing costs for the In-Home Supportive Services program; and

- Continuing the state and counties' commitment to reducing the numbers of behavioral health consumers who are incarcerated by reinstating over \$67 million for the Community Alternatives to Incarceration Grant Program.

While this budget addresses funding for important services in our state, there is still more work to be done. CBHDA has put forth 3 creative legislative proposals this year that would further the priorities of the Legislature and Governor – without increasing the state's costs. AB 727 (Nazarian) will allow counties to use local mental health funds to offer rental subsidies to people who are homeless and living with serious mental illness; AB 1372 (Levine) will enable crisis stabilization units to serve people with mental health emergencies for more than 23 hours while awaiting a hospital bed, and AB 395 (Bocanegra) will give counties additional time to submit their claims in order to receiving federal Medicaid reimbursement for the substance use disorder services they provide.

Additionally, “Because the best prevention to behavioral health problems among adults is reaching our children early, we look forward to working with the Legislature over the next year to find – and fund – California's gaps in services for our youth. It is time for California to create a plan for the future of behavioral health care in our state, one that reflects our state's values and treats behavioral health on par with the rest of health care,” said Ms. Barlow.

*The County Behavioral Health Directors Association is a statewide non-profit association that represents all 58 county behavioral health directors and 2 city mental health programs (Berkeley and Tri-City) which is dedicated to advocating for public policy and services on behalf of people who are living with substance use disorders and mental illness.*

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