

## **Mental Health America of California Public Policy Priorities 2017**

### **Improve Stakeholder Process**

1. Increase the number of counties engaging in the following practices:
  - a) involve stakeholders in expenditure determination processes
  - b) review in a public meeting with public notice at the state and county levels
  - c) include transparency of relevant budget data
  - d) include meaningful responses to stakeholder concerns at all stages of the process
  - e) meaningful and effective outreach to underserved racial and ethnic communities and other underserved communities
2. Develop and disseminate recommendations to improve local mental health boards.
3. Advocate for increased outreach and involvement of stakeholders at the state level meetings and forums including, but not limited to, the MHSOAC, DHCS, CBHDA, CalMHSA, etc.

### **Support Mental Wellness in Diverse Communities**

1. Support legislation that positively impacts and/or supports diverse communities
2. Promote the use of community health workers in behavioral health settings (Alameda County Model)
3. Support legislation and initiatives intended to disaggregate racial/ethnic data
4. Engage existing LGBTQ groups to become more involved in statewide mental health discussions
5. Support funding additional Strategic Planning Workgroups (SPWs) for the California Reducing Disparities Project including Middle Eastern communities Arabic-speaking communities, and Slavic/Russian-speaking communities.
6. Advocate for a designated seat on the MHSOAC for an expert in reducing disparities in diverse communities.
7. Advocate for DHCS to release the new County Cultural Competence Plan requirements.

### **Decrease the Number of Individuals that are Homeless and Living with Mental Illness:**

1. Support legislation that support the housing first approach and that provide services along with housing.
2. Promote existing diversion and release programs that provide housing and supports/services
3. Advocate for the use of homeless outreach programs in every county.
4. Engage in No Place Like Home Implementation

### **Support Student Mental Health:**

1. Support CAYEN in the following efforts:

- a. Begin the process of requiring mental health education to be included in school curriculum every year in every school.
  - b. Begin process to require at least one mental health professional on all school campuses.
2. Advocate for early mental health screenings for all students. Similar to standard school hearing tests
3. Support legislation and other initiatives that support and address student mental health.
4. Engage in planning discussions for the new student mental health legislation.

### **Restorative Justice and Juvenile Justice – Ending the Criminalization of Mental Illness**

1. Support legislation and initiatives that increase the use of pre-booking diversion programs.
2. Begin the process of advocating for more effective and culturally competent DUI courses that include mental health screening and appropriate follow up support.
3. Support LAPD's effort to provide people with mental health challenges, their families and the community with a point of contact that can guide them to the mental health supports and services when they need it.
4. Develop recommendations to address the issue of over-representation of people of color in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

### **Promotion of Prevention and Early Intervention – B4Stage4<sup>1</sup> Policies and Activities**

1. Support legislation and other initiatives that increase the use of B4Stage4 approaches.
2. Support strategies to increase awareness and help-seeking actions among people aged 15-25
3. Participate in the expansion and evaluation of multi-tiered school programs to
  - a) ensure that they appropriately address cultural and ethnic disparities,
  - b) include training on cultural competency, and
  - c) involve community members in developing the programs.
4. Support legislation and other initiatives to ensure that everyone entering the public or private health care systems are screened for behavioral health conditions. For those that screen positive, advocate for access to co-located behavioral health evaluation and follow up, or a telehealth evaluation and follow up.
5. Support the California Youth Empowerment Network's efforts to increase awareness of the term Transitional Age Youth (TAY) and the importance of TAY being recognized as its own unique demographic that does not fit into children services or adult services.

### **Address Mental Health and the Workforce**

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<sup>1</sup> B4Stage4 translates to before there is a mental health crisis. MHAC supports policy actions and efforts that create and enhance mental health supports, services and programs before there is a crisis.

1. Support legislation and other initiatives that promote the value of workplace mental health.
2. Work with CAYEN to deliver trainings to promote mental health careers to youth.
3. Investigate and promote incentives for entering into the mental health field, particularly for people from underserved communities.
4. Promote the benefits and effectiveness of county behavioural health departments/ community based organizations training and hiring community health workers (Promotores, Navigators, Cultural Brokers, etc.).
5. Co-sponsor peer support legislation with other statewide advocacy organizations.

**Increase the Number of Children Receiving the Entitlements They Have a Right to Receive**

1. Collaborate with other advocacy organizations that focus on children to address the needs of children who require mental health services.
2. Research current levels of compliance.

**Insurance**

1. Advocate for and monitor the implementation of parity including the enforcement of parity regulations.

**Increase Access to Mental Health Supports, Services and Treatment**

1. Identify three access barriers that MHAC can influence.
2. Develop a work plan to address each barrier.