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Mental Health America of California Public Policy Priorities 2019

1. Educate New Administration

- a. Engage in activities to educate the new administration on MHAC's priorities, general behavioral health topics, and recovery concepts to support informed policy development.
- b. Add new members of the relevant committees to MHAC's education target list.
- c. Develop relationships with Department of Finance, Legislative Analyst's Office, and new agency leadership.
- d. Engage with the Mental Health Caucus and Select Committee on Mental Health.
- e. Send a welcome/introductory letter to the new Administration.

2. Decrease the Number of Individuals that are Homeless and Living with Mental Illnesses

- a. Support legislation that supports the housing first approach and provides comprehensive services along with housing.
- b. Ensure policies and funding to address homelessness include a mental health component in any proposed solutions.
- c. Promote jail diversion and release programs that provide housing and supports/services without foregoing due process.
- d. Advocate for the use of homeless and at risk of homelessness outreach programs where needed and refer to models that work such as MHA LA's Village Project with special emphasis on outreach.
- e. Engage in "No Place like Home" implementation.

3. Increase Access to Behavioral Health Supports, Services and Treatment

- a. In partnership with the Connection Coalition, engage in various legislative and educational initiatives that increase access to timely and appropriate behavioral health services, supports, and treatment, including State level workforce development efforts.
- b. Support communities impacted by wildfires by providing mental health/trauma support information.

4. Improve Stakeholder Process

- a. Coordinate with the CA Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions and the Planning Council to develop and disseminate recommendations to improve the functioning of local mental health boards/commissions and make recommendations of qualifications and training for local board membership.
- b. Advocate for increased outreach, involvement, collaboration, and coordination of stakeholders at State level meetings and forums including, but not limited to, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC), the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), etc.

5. Support Behavioral Wellness in Diverse Communities

- a. Support legislation that positively impacts and/or supports diverse communities, including immigrant and undocumented communities.
- b. Promote the use of community health workers in behavioral health settings (Alameda County Model).
- c. Engage existing LGBTQ groups to become more involved in statewide mental health discussions.

6. Expand Telemedicine to Increase Access to Mental Health Services and Supports

- a. Sponsor or support legislation that expands the use of telemedicine to support mental wellness.
- b. Host/Co-Host a Capitol informational briefing on this item for legislative staff.

7. Support Military and Veteran Behavioral Health

- a. Coordinate and co-sponsor Military and Veteran Suicide Prevention and Awareness Week resolution in September.
- b. Support legislation that positively impacts and/or supports military and veteran mental health.
- c. Support legislation and initiatives intended to collect and report data related to behavioral health and the military.
- d. Support legislation and other policy initiatives that promote “No Wrong Door” policies and payment linkages between State, County and VA systems.

8. Support Youth Mental Health

- a. Support legislation that promotes resilience, as well as psychologically healthy and safe environments for youth.
- b. Support legislation to delay school start times in support of American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations.
- c. Sponsor legislation requiring mental health education to be included in school curriculum every year in every school.
- d. Advocate for early mental health screenings for all students, similar to standard school hearing tests.

9. Documentation and Reporting

- a. Advocate for policy changes related to consolidating program requirements to alleviate the administrative burden on counties, especially small counties.
- b. Advocate for improving the accuracy and quality of reported mental health data and outcomes.