

Mental Health America of California Public Policy Priorities 2022

1. Educate Administration and Legislature

- a. Engage in activities to educate the administration on MHAC's priorities, general behavioral health topics, and recovery concepts to support informed policy development.
- b. Develop relationships with Department of Finance, Legislative Analyst's Office, and new agency leadership.
- c. Engage with the Mental Health Caucus and Select Committee on Mental Health.
- d. Support Behavioral Wellness in Diverse Communities
- e. Support legislation that positively impacts and/or supports diverse communities, including immigrant and undocumented communities.
- f. Promote the use of community health workers in behavioral health settings (Alameda County Model).
- g. Engage LGBTQ groups to become more involved in statewide mental health advocacy.

2. Co-Sponsor AB 988 Mental Health: 988 Crisis Hotline (Bauer-Khan)

- a. Advocate and draft bill language that reflects and is inclusive of MHAC mission, values, principles and priorities
- b. Collaborate with co-sponsors and legislator to pass AB 988 into law.
- c. Lead in the roll out of AB 988 to ensure intent of bill is withheld

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. In partnership with Connection Coalition, hold a Legislative Briefing and Advocacy Day that includes identified initiatives.
- c. Support communities impacted by natural disasters by providing mental health/trauma support information.

4. Enforce Behavioral Health Parity

- a. Support legislation that enforces behavioral health parity.
- b. Engage in advocacy that promotes parity.
- c. Collaborate with groups, organizations, departments and policy makers to enforce and rollout parity laws.
- d. Advocate for the eradication of "Ghost Lists," inaccurate, outdated and otherwise useless lists of providers/treaters supplied by insurers to individuals seeking behavioral healthcare that do not result in care, treatment, supports or services.

5. Support Youth Mental Health

- a. Support legislation that promotes resilience, as well as psychologically healthy and safe environments for youth, specifically as defined by California Youth Empowerment Network (CAYEN).

6. Improve Stakeholder Process

- a. 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.

7. 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.