

Mental Health America of California Public Policy Priorities 2023

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 and peers in behavioral health settings.
- g. Engage LGBTQ groups to become more involved in statewide mental health advocacy.

2. Help Guide the Implementation of AB 988: 988 Crisis Hotline (Bauer-Khan)

- a. Ensure that implementation of AB 988 reflects and is inclusive of MHAC's mission, values, principles and priorities.
- b. Lead in the roll out of AB 988 to ensure the intent of the bill is upheld.
- c. Lead for inclusion of peers and other paraprofessionals on all mobile response teams.

3. Increase Access to Voluntary 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. Oppose legislation and policies that increase involuntary services.

5. Enforce Behavioral Health Parity and Timely Access

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- d. Advocate for the eradication of "Ghost Lists," inaccurate, outdated and otherwise useless lists of providers/treaters supplied by insurers to individuals seeking behavioral healthcare that do not result in care, treatment,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

timely access.

6. Support Youth Behavioral 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).

7. 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.

8. 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, voluntary services along with housing.
- b. Ensure that 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.
- e. Advocate for the expansion of supportive residential programs.

9. Increase and Improve the Mental Health Care Workforce

- a. Support legislation and policies that increase career pathways for Transition Age Youth.
- b. Advocate for policies that elevate and expand peer employment.
- c. Support legislation and policies that increase the mental health workforce.
- d. Promote programs designed to maintain the current mental health workforce.

10. Preserve the original vision and intent of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)

- a. Support efforts that adhere to the non-supplantation provisions of the MHSA.
- b. Support legislation that limits MHSA funding to voluntary services.
- c. Advocate for policies that preserve Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funding.