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March 23, 2016

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Executive Director

The Honorable Ken Cooley
Assemblymember, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 3146
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 2279

Dear Assemblymember Cooley:

The Little Hoover Commission supports Assembly Bill 2279, the measure authored to increase the accountability of statewide and county-by-county funding from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

In its 2015 report, *Promises Still to Keep: A Decade of the Mental Health Services Act*, the Commission found it difficult to locate key information about funds generated each year by Proposition 63 and how that money is being used across the state to enhance access to mental health services and prevention-oriented practices. The Commission found that despite being required to annually submit electronic revenue and expenditure reports, many counties failed to meet reporting deadlines. As of December 2014, the Commission found the Department of Health Care Services and the oversight commission had received full reports from all counties for 2010-11, but were lacking reports from several counties for 2011-12 and later years.

The Commission made several recommendations aimed at improving transparency and financial accountability of MHSA funds to the public. Among the simplest strategies, the Commission recommended the state make MHSA finances more transparent and make it easier for Californians to see how and where their tax dollars are being spent. Specifically, the Commission recommended that all county MHSA plans and reports submitted to the state be sent to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, who would then post the information online on their website.

Because Assembly Bill 2279 would require the Department of Health Care Services to collect counties' MHSA revenue reports and provide county-by-county comparisons, and it would require the information to be posted online, the Commission supports this measure.

The Little Hoover Commission supports this common sense measure to improve the Mental Health Services Act, and encourages a yes vote on AB 2279. If I or the Commission can provide any further assistance or expertise, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Carole D'Elia
Executive Director

c: Commissioners, Little Hoover Commission