



California Association of Mental Health Peer-Run Organizations
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May 25, 2016

Little Hoover Commission

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via email littlehoover@lhc.ca.gov

Hearing on Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), May 26, 2016

The California Association of Mental Health Peer-Run Organizations (CAMHPRO) is a nonprofit statewide organization consisting of consumer-run organizations and programs. CAMHPRO's mission is to transform communities and the mental health system throughout California to empower, support, and ensure the rights of consumers, eliminate stigma, and advance self-determination for all those affected by mental health issues by championing the work of consumer-run organizations.

The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) has brought tremendous resources to Californians who face challenges with mental health through numerous programs and services. The MHSA has provided for recovery to individuals who would in many situations have gone without the opportunity of recovery.

The MHSA has continued to evolve; however, the legislation has not kept equivalent pace with delegating responsibility, oversight, accountability and the necessary assignment of authority to enforce the compliance of regulations set forth to uphold the philosophy, principles and practices set forth within the MHSA.

CAMHPRO has identified three main topics of concerns of our consumer stakeholders:

- 1) The Issue Resolution Process;
- 2) The inability to track MHSA funding within counties;
- 3) The consistent deterioration of the stakeholder process in county and state processes.

The Issue Resolution Process:

Stakeholders have no clear direction of which entity to consult when issues arise. Stakeholders need a consistent and clearly defined Issue Resolution Process (IRP) written in layman terms. CAMHPRO requests the goal of defining a consistent issue resolution process throughout the entire mental health system beginning at the local level and continuing to the state level if the issue isn't resolved at the local level. Additionally, CAMHPRO requests the legislature determine which entity will ensure counties adhere to their contractual agreement of meeting the



minimum requirement of an IRP, in order to receive funding and give that entity the authority to enforce compliance.

The inability to track MHSA revenue and expenditures within counties:

Stakeholders are unable to track revenue and expenditures within counties. CAMHPRO has participated in numerous meetings with stakeholders, county agencies, and state agencies and understands there are numerous reasons why this is occurring. CAMHPRO understands the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) is currently working on ways to disperse financial information on their webpage. The MHSOAC can only disperse information that is provided to them. CAMHPRO understands there is a lack of reporting from many counties. CAMHPRO understands there are numerous bureaucratic reasons why some counties are not reporting. CAMHPRO requests the legislature appoint an entity to not only be responsible for dispersing the information to the public in a user-friendly format available online, but a required reporting process by which the MHSOAC receives the information in a timely manner to make available to stakeholders. CAMHPRO supports current legislation, AB 2279 – Mental Health Services Act: County-by-County Spending Reports that would require DHCS, MHSOAC and the County Behavioral Health Directors to develop and administer county-by-county MHSA revenue, expenditures, and comparisons and make available on the OAC webpage. CAMHPRO requests the legislature determine which entity is best suited to perform each of these responsibilities to ensure stakeholders have access to revenue and expenditures within each county.

The consistent deterioration of the stakeholder process in county and state processes:

The MHSA mandates involvement of the public in identifying local funding priorities and ensures that a meaningful stakeholder process guides the planning of the programs under the MHSA components. This is an ongoing inclusive stakeholder process involving consumers, families, caregivers and partner agencies to identify community issues related to mental illness resulting from gaps in community services and support, and stigma and discrimination. The process assess the current capacity, defines the populations to be served, and determines the strategies for providing effective services. MHSA values are mandated in the regulations.

Stakeholder inclusion has deteriorated in the mandated stakeholder process. This is of great concern to stakeholders and is in direct conflict to the MHSA regulations. CAMHPRO requests the legislature appoint an entity that has the authority and ability to ensure stakeholders are included as mandated.

Additionally, CAMHPRO requests the legislature itself honor the stakeholder inclusion as mandated in the MHSA. CAMHPRO requests the legislature allow and consider stakeholder input prior to allocating MHSA funds to initiatives that were not inclusive of a meaningful stakeholder process.



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Thank you for your consideration.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 415-341-9460, or Heidi Strunk, CAMHPRO
Advocacy Coordinator, at 916-212-3685.

Sincerely,

Sally Zinman

Executive Director, California Association of Mental health Peer Run Organizations
(CAMHPRO)