



CALIFORNIA COALITION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

CALIFORNIA COALITION FOR MENTAL HEALTH AGENDA FOR FAIRNESS—2014

American Association for Marriage and
Family Therapy California Division

California Academy of Child and
Adolescent Psychiatry

California Alliance of Child and Family
Services

California Association for Licensed
Professional Clinical Counselors

California Association of Health
Facilities

California Association of Marriage and
Family Therapists

California Association of Mental Health
Patients Rights Advocates

California Association of Mental Health
Peer Run Organizations

California Association of Rural Health
Clinics

California Association of Social
Rehabilitation Agencies

California Council of Community
Mental Health Agencies

California Elder Mental Health and
Aging Coalition

California Hospital Association

California Institute for Mental Health

California Mental Health Advocates for
Children and Youth

California Mental Health Directors
Association

California Mental Health Planning
Council

California Primary Care Association

California Psychiatric Association

California Psychological Association

California Society for Clinical Social
Work

California Women's Mental Health
Policy Council

Disability Rights California

Mental Health America of California

NAMI California

National Association of Social Workers,
California Chapter

Occupational Therapy Association of
California, Inc.

Orange County Coalition for Mental
Health

Racial and Ethnic Mental Health
Disparities Coalition

San Diego Coalition for Mental Health

The California Coalition for Mental Health (CCMH) has identified twelve lasting public policy priorities that serve to guide the Coalition's efforts throughout the year. The foundation of CCMH's Agenda for Fairness is rooted in an over-arching commitment to fair and just treatment and quality integrated care for all Californians living with mental illness.

RIGHT TO TREATMENT: CCMH believes no one living with mental illness should be denied treatment. Every person living in California should have access to mental health care, regardless of age, race, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, family living situation, or immigration status. Treatment must be available in the community in the least restrictive and most appropriate setting. CCMH recognizes the value of prevention and early intervention and supports the principle that recovery oriented treatment must be available to persons living with mental illness.

FUNDING: CCMH is dedicated to assuring full, fair, and adequate funding of the public mental health and substance use systems. In California, less than half of the persons living with serious mental and emotional illness receive care. The human suffering of families and persons living with mental illness, who may also have substance use conditions, when unable to find or afford care is great and the cost to society is tremendous. Underfunding of public mental health and substance use systems and discrimination against adults and children living with serious mental and emotional illness and substance use conditions has caused this inability to provide adequate care.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT: CCMH supported the passage of and supports the implementation of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). It was passed by the voters in 2004 with the intent to reduce the long-term adverse impact on individuals, families, and state and local budgets, which result from untreated serious mental illness. It expands successful, innovative service programs for children, adults, and seniors in California, including fostering culturally and linguistically competent approaches for underserved populations. Despite the economy and recent reductions in other key funding sources (particularly realignment), MHSA programs are transforming the community mental health system. Over 400,000 Californians have been served by MHSA programs, of which many are from traditionally underserved ethnic and culturally diverse populations.

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION: CCMH advocates for a mental health system that seeks to prevent mental illness from becoming severe and disabling by prevention, early detection, and timely access to age, gender, as well as culturally

and linguistically appropriate services in the most appropriate setting. Through the investment in prevention and early intervention and the opportunities for better community care through the Mental Health Services Act, the need for intensive community services and supports will be reduced.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION: CCMH vigorously opposes discrimination against persons living with mental illness and substance use conditions in employment, housing, insurance, respite care, education, and other areas of life. CCMH strongly endorses social inclusion strategies as a means of eliminating discrimination. Persons living with mental illness and co-occurring substance use conditions are entitled to equal protections under the law.

HUMAN RESOURCES: CCMH supports efforts to improve the quality of life of individuals and communities by strengthening the effectiveness of those who work to prevent, treat, and support recovery for those living with mental illness and substance use conditions. There is a shortage of needed mental health and substance use professionals to adequately and appropriately serve the increasing linguistically and culturally diverse populations in California. There is also an ever-increasing shortage of trained mental health professionals in the public mental health system.

EMPLOYMENT: CCMH supports the right of all persons to find and succeed in employment and to be fully integrated into their communities. Individuals with mental health and substance use conditions who have the desire and need to work should have access to employment resources that provide needed supports in order to seek, obtain, and maintain employment in their communities.

EDUCATION: CCMH supports the right of children living with mental illness to have free and appropriate education to best meet their needs and offered in the least restrictive setting. Treatment should be recovery oriented and provide treatment for prevention and early intervention. Education should include the same academic standards as is provided for their peers with appropriate support and accommodations for their mental health conditions.

HOUSING: CCMH supports the availability of safe, clean, affordable, and accessible housing for individuals and families living with mental health and substance use conditions. CCMH advocates for increased funding for supportive housing and for all forms of housing assistance for persons living with mental health and substance use conditions. CCMH opposes efforts and legislation that weakens Federal Fair Housing Act Protection. CCMH supports increasing SSI/SSP payments sufficient to assure housing opportunities throughout the state. Housing should provide a recovery oriented atmosphere and should be integrated into the rich and varied communities of California. Persons living with mental health and substance use conditions must have a voice regarding where and with whom they live. While persons living with mental illness represent less than five percent of the population, they represent 25 percent of the homeless— persons in need of housing assistance.

INCARCERATION: CCMH supports efforts to reduce incarcerations of persons living with mental illness, and seeks to assure that while incarcerated and upon their release they receive appropriate and necessary medical and mental health treatment. CCMH further supports the right of incarcerated persons living with mental illness to be free from any form of discrimination due to mental illness. CCMH supports the development of an integrated transition or discharge plan, with input from community agencies, for each person living with mental illness who is incarcerated, prior to his/her return to the community. Many persons living with mental illness have been incarcerated in jails, prisons, and juvenile justice facilities due to inappropriate and inadequate treatment. Furthermore, there has been a history of mistreatment of persons who are incarcerated who live with mental illness.

INSURANCE: CCMH is committed to assuring comprehensive, flexible mental health coverage provided at par with physical illness and in a manner that assures continuity and coordination of care. CCMH advocates for parity and health care reform legislation to facilitate interdisciplinary and wrap-around care, to ensure access to and continuity in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, and to provide such diagnosis and treatment under the same terms and conditions as provided for physical illness. CCMH advocates for state and Federal oversight to assure that health plans comply with applicable law. California's parity law mandates coverage for certain serious mental health conditions. Federal and state parity laws are intended to ensure that benefits and treatment restrictions are equal across the mental health and physical health continuum. Legislation is necessary to mandate coverage of all mental illnesses as well as substance use conditions.

AWARENESS EDUCATION: CCMH seeks to educate schools, primary care physicians, and the general public in recognizing the symptoms of mental illness and understanding the value of promptly diagnosing and treating mental health and substance use conditions. Mental illness is real and treatable, yet it is not well understood, which leads to stigma and the reluctance of individuals and families to seek assistance early in the onset of a mental health condition. CCMH recognizes that anti-stigma education can help to alleviate this situation when such efforts are appropriately designed and funded. Such education, to be effective, must be culturally and linguistically appropriate for the community.