

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA

December 18, 2007

AMENDMENT TO ITEM NO. 77

Communities of color in Los Angeles County face severe economic, cultural, linguistic and physical barriers for the treatment of mental illness. These individuals are no less likely to suffer from mental illness, yet they do not have equal access to treatment and services. Ethnic communities are less insured and therefore they have less access to mental health care; there are too-few minority mental health specialists in our County and language barriers in mental health care persist. In addition, cultural stigmas associated with mental illness—more than location, language or other barriers—stop these populations from seeking health care.

Substantive measures can be taken to combat disparities in access to mental health care. These measures include increasing research specific to communities of color; tailoring treatment to those from different cultures and who speak different languages; and increasing efforts to reduce the stigma of seeking mental health services. Efforts to increase and improve health care access to ethnic communities are

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Molina _____

Yaroslavsky _____

Knabe _____

Antonovich _____

Burke _____

outlined in the Health section of the State Legislative Agenda but are largely absent from the Mental Health section. This motion addresses that disparity by ensuring that efforts to improve these individuals' access to care applies as equally to mental health services as those related to physical health.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT:

The State Legislative Agenda be amended to include language to:

1. Support efforts to increase mental health education and training slots at public universities and teaching hospitals, expand workforce development funding and training programs for mental health and other allied health professions and increase efforts to recruit mental health specialists to work with primarily poor and medically uninsured patients and patients in difficult-to-reach areas; and
2. Support efforts to provide cultural and linguistic competence standards for all mental health programs in order to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care; and
3. Support proposals to increase the utilization of mental health services in ethnic communities through the development of culturally appropriate outreach, messaging and marketing campaigns.