

Los Angeles County  
Mental Health Commission  
*“Advocacy, Accountability and Oversight in Action”*

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Lily Sofiani, Second District Representative

May 4, 2022

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., PH.D.,  
Director, Department of Mental Health  
510 S. Vermont Ave  
Los Angeles, California 90020

**Dear Supervisors and Director:**

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT PUBLIC HEARING  
FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 ANNUAL UPDATE**

On April 28, 2022, the Chair and a quorum of the Los Angeles County Mental Health Commission (Commission) hosted the FY 2022-2023 Mental Health Services Act Annual Update (Annual Update) Public Hearing. The Department of Mental Health's submission of the Annual Update posted for a 45-day Comment Period, exceeding the 30-day requirement, on March 7, 2022, through April 19, 2022. The Commission, established under Section 5604, conducted a public hearing of the draft Annual Update at the close of the 45-day comment period. In accordance with Section 5848, the adopted Annual Update shall summarize and analyze the Commission's recommended revisions.

We commend the Department of Mental Health for its continued efforts to strengthen its engagement with community stakeholders through the geographic Service Area Leadership Teams (SALTs), Unserved/Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCCs) and combined Community Leadership Team (CLT) in the ongoing planning and implementation of the Mental Health Services Act and on the outcomes, you are achieving. The Commission looks forward to your continued progress improving the lives of clients receiving services in the public mental health system.

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It is with pleasure that the Los Angeles County Mental Health Commission submits these recommendations for your review and consideration. While our recommendations represent the consensus of the Commission, we urge you and the Board of Supervisors to review all stakeholder testimony received during the public comment period when rendering your final decisions on the Annual Update. Our recommendations center around four broad themes:

1. Inequities/Disparities
2. Housing and Homelessness
3. Budget and Accountability
4. Criminal Justice

### **Inequities and Disparities**

State law, Welfare Institutions Code (WIC) Section 5812.5(d), 5868(b), 5878.1(a); and, 9 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 3200.100 requires a county's MHSA Three Year Plan to address disparities, and cultural and linguistic competency by incorporating and working to achieve stated goals in all aspects of policymaking, program design, administration and service delivery. To accomplish this, the Commission urges action in the following areas:

#### Data

The Commission acknowledges that Department's inclusion of data metrics in this year's Annual Update, but continues to urge our County to improve data collection, and report out by Service Planning Area (SPA) and Supervisorial District (SD), to identify inequities and identify data sources that can be used to help with clarifying unmet needs.

#### Demographics

The Department should be sensitive to and accountable for resolving inequities around: race and ethnicity, immigration status, geographic location, age (with an option for clients to elect their choice of programs from TAY, Adult or Older Adult categories) and physical and mental health condition. Special attention should be paid toward inequities in populations with physical disabilities and others who qualify under Americans with Disabilities Act status. The Commission also recommends special attention on increasing the access and resources for the Asian Pacific Islander population due to ongoing negative experiences from the communities as a reaction due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We continue to urge you to correct for disparities in funding across underserved and unserved populations, including ethnic populations in all service areas.

#### Outreach to Families

While the Commission acknowledges the efforts of the Department to increase access for students and their families through robust collaboration with both Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), we recommend continuing to increase efforts to expand school based mental health services.

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### **Housing & Homelessness**

Over this past year, the County has established, and is in the process of opening, several Restorative Care Villages Countywide thanks, in large part, to the advocacy, efforts and funding of the Department. The Commission acknowledges these efforts and recommends expanding the RCV model to additional campuses and to include youth and children mental health beds and services in the model.

### **Budget and Accountability**

Currently, the MHSA Fund Balance is in excess of \$1 billion, with the anticipation of increased funds coming from the State. It is imperative that the Department drive this funding into the community, by continuing to build up access to services, increasing funding to the stakeholder engagement groups, increasing the CAF and other programs that will benefit our mental health stakeholders and individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.

The Commission would also recommend the creation of dashboards for reporting both program and budget data per SPA/SD.

### **Criminal Justice**

The Commission acknowledges that a significant number of the jail's population have Serious Mental Illness and feels it is essential to do what it reasonably can to care for this vulnerable population. The Commission also acknowledges the positive work of the County's Department of Health Services Office of Diversion and Re-Entry (DHS-ODR) in moving forward the Board's Care First Jail Last initiative. On April 28, 2022, the Commission voted to strongly recommend the DMH allocate \$25 million a year ongoing MHSA funds to support the DHS-ODR services to MHSA eligible clients

In closing, the Commission urges the Board of Supervisors to approve the FY2022-2023 MHSA Annual Update and encourage the Department of Mental Health to continue to improve upon the stakeholder and community engagement in preparing future Annual Updates and MHSA 3-year plans.

The Commission looks forward to your continued progress improving the lives of clients receiving services in the public mental health system and continuing our partnership.

Sincerely yours,

Stacy Dalgleish  
Chair, Mental Health Commission

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