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## **PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

*August 15, 2013*

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### **CALIFORNIA STATE AUDITOR ACKNOWLEDGES LA COUNTY FOR IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION OF MHSA-FUNDED PROGRAMS** *Auditor found positive results in programs that helped reduce homelessness and incarceration.*

**Los Angeles, CA** –The California State Auditor’s Office has completed and released findings on a nine-month audit of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) programs in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Santa Clara and Sacramento counties. Although the brief version of the *California State Auditor Report* calls for statewide improvement in oversight and accountability, the full report acknowledges the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) for its comprehensive approach to evaluating the outcomes of its MHSA programs and using those outcomes to improve services. Additionally, the full report states “Los Angeles effectively used its contracting process with program providers to communicate all program goals for which they were responsible.” After a review of its findings, the Auditor had no recommendations for Los Angeles County.

“We are pleased that Los Angeles County’s extensive stakeholder input and professional handling of outcome measurement of MHSA were recognized in the state audit,” said LACDMH Director Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.

Los Angeles County’s use of evidence-based practices to intervene early in the course of a mental illness have demonstrated symptom reduction and improved overall functioning for children, adolescents and young adults.

Outcomes for adults enrolled in MHSA-funded Full Service Partnership programs include:

- 71% reduction in days spent homeless
- 49% reduction in days spent incarcerated
- 59% increase in days living independently in an apartment or house

Outcomes for children enrolled in MHSA-funded Full Service Partnership programs include:

- 57% reduction in days spent in emergency shelter
- 71% reduction in days spent homeless

California Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg requested the audit in response to concerns about county MHSA implementation.

The audit focused on the use of performance and outcome measures to assess program impact and improve services; consistency between a county's state-approved MHSA plans and program implementation so it met stakeholder criteria; and ensuring MHSA funds were expended appropriately. Auditors found LA County had implemented oversight and monitoring processes that ensured expenditures met MHSA requirements, and that services are consistent with MHSA plans developed by stakeholders and approved by the state.

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is the largest county-operated mental health department in the United States, directly operating 75 program sites and more than 100 co-located sites. Each year, it contracts with approximately 1,000 agencies and individual practitioners to provide a spectrum of mental health services to more than 250,000 residents of all ages. The Department's mission -- enriching lives through partnership to strengthen our community's capacity to support recovery and resiliency -- is accomplished by working with stakeholders and community partners to provide clinically competent, culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate mental health services to clients in the least restrictive manner possible.

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