

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER AND
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Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Reform

The Mental Health Services Act radically shaped how California provides mental health services and cares for those suffering from behavioral health disorders. When this was passed by the voters in 2004, there was overwhelming public support to invest heavily in these resources. That need has only grown since. In the 17 years since MHSA’s implementation, over \$18 billion have been invested in these services by the state and counties.

To ensure that funding is spent in alignment with state priorities, MHSA funds are allocated into specific spending buckets that counties must abide by. While these targeted funding streams have been critical in investments in infrastructure, innovation, prevention and other critical objectives, the current structures have also left money on the table and made it difficult to utilize available funds.

Mental health professionals and county representatives have highlighted the need for more local flexibility in spending available resources, especially for investing in critical infrastructure and crisis response services. MHSA requires counties to use a certain percentage of funding for specified purposes. SB 970 (Eggman) would amend the MHSA by eliminating those percentage funding requirements commencing with the 2024–25 fiscal year. SB 970 is a critical step towards this flexibility and will free up funds that counties can utilize to best serve their residents in need. As Los Angeles County continues to scale-up field bases services, crisis response and in-patient and outpatient infrastructure, more flexible funding streams are critical.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer, through the Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch, to support SB 970 (Eggman), the MHSA Outcomes and Accountability Act.

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