

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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County Mental Health Directors Say “No” on Prop. 1E

SACRAMENTO, CA – The California Mental Health Directors Association (CMHDA) today announced its opposition to Proposition 1E on the May 19 ballot, saying the diversion of more than \$460 million in voter-approved funding for community health services would hurt people in need and cost taxpayers more in the long run.

“California’s County Mental Health Directors oppose Proposition 1E because it will hurt the people we serve now, and seriously threaten our ability to meet California’s mental health needs in the future,” said Dr. Wayne Clark, CMHDA President and Monterey County Director of Behavioral Health.

Five years ago, County Mental Health Directors supported Proposition 63 to begin filling the gaping holes in California’s mental health funding system, and voters resoundingly approved the measure because they recognized a tremendous, long-neglected need for cost-effective community mental health services. Prop. 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) has delivered as promised – providing services to over 200,000 more people with mental illness who were not served before voters approved the measure, alleviating homelessness, and diverting thousands from more costly institutions including our jails, prisons, hospitals, and emergency rooms.

“Cutting more than \$460 million in MHSA funds will put thousands of people with mental illness at risk now, and could mean they will wind up back on the streets or in hospitals at a much higher cost to taxpayers,” Clark continued.

At the same time voters are being asked to divert mental health funding away from voter-approved programs, “The Soloist,” a major motion picture released just last week, has struck a chord with many whose lives have been touched by mental illness, and many others who will learn about the tragic interplay between mental illness and chronic homelessness through the struggles of the movie’s main character, Nathaniel Ayers.

“It is no coincidence that in a time of profound economic struggle, one of the top movies in the country documents the inspiring true story of a homeless man with mental illness who finds a path to recovery. We all want to see more success stories like Nathaniel’s, not fewer, and the economic calamity families are facing now means the need has never been greater.”

Clark said Prop. 1E would seriously threaten California’s ability to provide more of the proven, “whatever it takes” community mental health services that have helped the real life Nathaniel and thousands more like him move off of the streets, into housing, and onto a long path to recovery. California voters must vote NO on Proposition 1E. We must take a stand and reject this proposal to cut our communities’ critically-needed mental health services.”

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The California Mental Health Directors Association is a non-profit advocacy association representing the mental health directors from each of California's 58 counties and two cities.