



Karol Swartzlander, Executive Director
Gavin Newsom, Governor

California's Behavioral Health Services Act & Its Impact on Older Adults – A Call to ACTION!

Time to “GET LOUD” about protecting older adult behavioral health statewide as Proposition 1 implementation continues.

Passed in March 2024, Proposition 1, including the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), made sweeping changes statewide, specifically:

- Carved out 30% of its resources for housing supports and services.
- Added substance use disorder services to its previous mandate for mental health services.
- Shifted prevention activities to the California Department of Public Health.
- Transferred coverage of mild to moderate behavioral health (BH) services from county BH departments to Medi-Cal managed care providers.

County BH Departments are drafting their three-year Integrated Plans (IPs) now. Per BHSA guidance, counties are required to meaningfully engage with the community and providers in building IPs. We have already seen complete cuts to important prevention and early intervention programs for several groups, including older adults. Is this happening in your county?

“Currently, older adults receive the fewest services and behavioral health programs – we cannot afford any reductions.”

A map of the county Integrated Plan process:

- **County BH Departments Release IP Drafts on or Before 3.31.26**
- **30 Day Public Comment Period**
- **BH Commission/Board Hosts Public Hearing**
- **BH Departments Revise IPs to Final and Submit to Board of Supervisors**
- **Board of Supervisors Meeting for Approval Open to the Public**
- **Final IPs due to the State 6.30.26**

“Tremendous pressure is on counties to do more, with less money – 30% less in many cases.”



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Here is what you can do right now:

1. Contact your county BH Department. Ask when the public comment period for their Integrated Plan (IP) is. Ask if reductions have been made in programs for older adults, such as caregiver support, peer counseling, etc.
2. Share your support. Submit a letter in support for older adult programs with your concerns about program reductions to:
 - Your County Director of Behavioral Health
 - Chair of your county's BH Commission/Board
 - Your state representatives
3. Attend meetings of your local BH Commission/Board.
 - Public Hearings on IPs can be held during or after the 30-day public review period.
 - 72-hour public notice is required.
 - Invite interested community members to increase engagement and advocacy (consumers, advocates, family members, service providers, caregivers, etc.)
4. Speak up at your Board of Supervisors meeting when the IP is on the agenda.

Locate your county's BH contacts in the CA Department of Aging behavioral health toolkit (search: California Department of Aging Behavioral Health Toolkits).

For information or to report program cuts, contact:

Janet C. Frank, CA Commission on Aging BH Committee Chair, jcfrank@ucla.edu

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