



March 18, 2013

Holly Mitchell
Honorable Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
State Capitol, Room 2163
Sacramento, CA 95814

CHAIRPERSON
John Ryan

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Jane Adcock

**SUBJECT: Administration's Budget Trailer Bill Proposal #610: 1991-92
Realignment Growth: Mental Health and CalWORKs – OPPOSE**

The California Mental Health Planning Council is under federal and state mandate to advocate on behalf of direct consumers and family members in California. We are writing to express our concern and strong opposition to the Budget Trailer Bill Proposal # 610 – Diverting assured mental health funds to county Cal-WORKS Maintenance of Effort funds. We join our colleagues at California Mental Health Director's Association, Disability Rights California, and National Alliance on Mental Illness in opposing this proposal and we hope your Subcommittees will reject it.

- **Advocacy**
- **Evaluation**
- **Inclusion**

In 1991, mental health funding streams were identified but prioritized behind federal entitlements. Mental Health funding took another hit when the Administration permanently reduced the vehicle license fees while simultaneously eliminating what was left of General Fund support. Every budget bill has brought a new diversion, reduction, or deferral. For the upcoming year's budget, the Administration proposes to siphon off even more mental health funds again in order to help counties afford their Maintenance of Effort contribution for Cal-Works. This reduction, when combined with the additional mental health responsibilities counties will face, will severely jeopardize essential county safety nets. The responsibilities shifted to the counties have not been balanced with an equal or dependable measure of fiscal support and this proposal clearly illustrates and continues that inequality.

The Public Safety Realignment of 2011 essentially created an unfunded liability for counties by increasing a high-needs population with no dedicated funding for their services. Diverting mental health funding while increasing the demand is ill advised. Rather, this situation could be solved with new legislation to designate a fixed percentage of Realignment dollars to fund mental health services for released inmates. The funds proposed for diversion under TBL 610 are the only discretionary funds available for services for all of the underserved and uninsured populations, not just parolees. Other expenses shouldered solely by counties are crisis services, civil commitments, indigent care, and the federal match required for funding certain mental health programs. The state will ultimately suffer through a reduction in federal mental health funding if the counties lose their ability to meet the federal required match.

The Administration has made many promises to its constituents and counties to garner their support for increased revenues this fiscal year. Implicit in the promise of Realignment and the tax increase was an assurance by the Administration that counties would be sufficiently funded to meet their mandates. The Council hopes that this Legislature will stand by those assurances, recognize that mental health services are essential to public health, and maintain the mental health funding formula that was promised. Please oppose Budget Trailer Bill Proposal 610 and preserve the integrity and intent of Realignment.

Sincerely,



John Ryan, Chair
California Mental Health Planning Council

cc: Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee # 3
Assembly Budget Subcommittee # 1
Diane Cummins, John Doyle, Department of Finance
Lark Park, Office of the Governor
Honorable Members and Consultants, Senate Health Committee
Honorable Members and Consultants, Assembly Health Committee
Diane Van Maren, Consultant, Senate Pro Tempore Steinberg
Agnes Lee, Consultant, Assembly Speaker Pérez
Michelle Baass, Consultant, Senate Budget Subcommittee # 3
Andrea Margolis, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee # 1
Meredith Wurden, Consultant, Senate Office of Research
Kirk Feely and Joe Parra, Consultants, Senate Republican Caucus
Michelle Baca and Peter Anderson, Consultants, Assembly Republican Caucus
Lishaun Francis, Legislative Analyst Office
Mike Wilkening, Undersecretary, California Health & Human Services Agency (CHHS)
Kiyomi Burchill, Assistant Secretary, CHHS
Patricia Ryan, California Mental Health Directors Association
Jessica Cruz, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Dan Brzovic, Disability Rights California