



April 5, 2013

Toby Douglas
Director, Department of Health Care Services
P.O. Box 997413 MS 0006
Sacramento, CA 95899-7413

CHAIRPERSON
John Ryan

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Jane Adcock

- Advocacy
- Evaluation
- Inclusion

Dear Mr. Douglas:

The California Mental Health Planning Council is writing to offer its expertise and knowledge as your Department seeks to appoint a new Deputy Director of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.

As you are aware, the Planning Council has many responsibilities established in both federal and state statutes. Prior to the Budget Act of 2012, Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5772 (i) included, "To participate in the recruitment of candidates for the position of Director of Mental Health and provide advice on the final selection."

For many years the Planning Council leadership met regularly with the Director of Mental Health to discuss and advise on emerging issues in the public mental health system. While the Department no longer exists, state oversight of the system continues with various functions now falling under the purview of several different state agencies. The Planning Council's role to advise, evaluate and advocate has not changed and we have been working with Vanessa Baird and others to continue our role as effectively as possible.

With Ms. Baird's recent announcement of retirement, the mental health functions within your department will undergo yet another transition. While we wish her the best, her departure will continue the instability that both mental health and alcohol and drug programs have been experiencing for the past two years. Thus, it is important to select a candidate who is well qualified, knowledgeable and able to assume the role of leader for mental health and substance abuse in California. Stability in foundation, strong leadership and growth in programs and outcomes will produce success for both your department and the stakeholders and taxpayers of California. Ultimately, our common goal is to improve and safeguard the lives of Californian's living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

We hope you will call upon the expertise of the Planning Council as you endeavor to select a qualified candidate for the Deputy Director position. If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact me or Jane Adcock, Executive Director.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Ryan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Ryan
Chair, California Mental Health Planning Council