

California Coalition for Mental Health
californiamentalhealth.org

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With Mental Health Progress Under Threat, Consumers, Providers, Experts Outline Urgent Priorities for California Lawmakers

Sacramento, CA – With California’s progress in expanding mental health access through the Affordable Care Act and Mental Health Parity legislation under threat, lawmakers must act urgently to protect care and prevent more homelessness, the California Coalition for Mental Health (CCMH) said today. The urgent priority list from CCMH includes strengthening the mental health workforce, preventing unjust incarceration of people with mental illness, and making housing accessible for people living with mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

The recommendations from CCMH are notable in that they represent a rare consensus among mental health stakeholders, including family and consumer organizations, nonprofit service providers, clinicians, professional associations, hospitals, and advocacy organizations.

“California’s mental health infrastructure has been strained to meet the needs of the Golden State for decades. With our recent gains in coverage for mental health care at risk, it is all the more urgent that legislators act on these cost-effective recommendations to preserve Californian’s connections with life-saving care,” said Joseph Robinson, Chair of CCMH.

Since the Affordable Care Act was adopted, 5 million Californians gained access to health insurance. Boosting the opportunities for Californians to live mentally well, state law requires public and private health plans to cover mental health conditions. Advocates are warning of a “[mental health crisis](#)” that would result from proposed federal repeal of healthcare reform. [More than 14 million Californians who are insured through Medi-Cal could see benefits slashed](#) and millions could lose insurance access, including for mental health services.

CCMH’s recommendations issued to the Legislature today include:

- Strengthening the mental health workforce to meet access standards for a growing and diverse state, including: supporting student loan repayment/forgiveness, improving service reimbursement rates, expanding opportunities for mental health consumers to enter the workforce.

- Reforming bail and pre-trial justice policies to prevent unnecessary and costly incarceration of people with mental illness.
- Investing in affordable housing and reducing barriers to building homes for those living with mental health and substance abuse disorders.

The set of urgent recommendations is both cost-effective and backed up by evidence of success. Read the full recommendations at californiamentalhealth.org.

The broad CCMH coalition will be meeting with legislators as soon as today to advance these urgent priorities in light of the aggressive timeline for federal action on healthcare.

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