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Leaders Applaud Governor Brown's Budget for Making Mental Health History

Sacramento – Only eleven days into the country recognizing the month of May as “Mental Health Month,” Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. is making mental health history in California. In his May Revise State Budget for 2018-19 released earlier today, Governor Brown has proposed millions in new state funding investments for community mental health care.

“In our many years working as leaders and advocates for California mental health care, we have never before seen a Governor put a priority on mental health when crafting the state budget. This is history in the making” said Yvonnia Brown, President of the County Behavioral Health Directors Association, and behavioral health director for Merced County.

“Today, we are proud to live and work in California, where our Governor wants to invest in mental health and address homelessness,” said Zima Creason, President and CEO of Mental Health America of California (MHAC). “We are eager to learn more details of the Governor’s proposals, and to work with the Legislature in sending the Governor a state budget package that contains new investments in mental health and housing.”

While the Governor approached California’s economic situation very cautiously, he proposed to use some the state’s surplus in three key areas: infrastructure needs, homelessness and mental health. Notable General Fund proposals for mental health include:

- **Repayment of Children's Mental Health Mandates** (approximately \$254 million) for services provided by counties prior to year 2004 to seriously emotionally disturbed children. The Administration expects counties to use this funding for early intervention and prevention of mental health services for youth, with an emphasis on teens.
- **Augmenting Homeless Mentally Ill Outreach and Treatment** (\$50 million) to provide counties with targeted funding for multi-disciplinary teams to support intensive outreach, treatment and related services for homeless persons with mental illness.
- **Increasing Mental Health Graduate Medical Education** (\$55 million) to support psychiatric graduate medical education programs serving Health Professional Shortage Areas or Medically Underserved Areas in rural portions of the state.

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- ***Sending the No Place Like Home program to the November 2018 Ballot***, which would dedicate \$2 billion in bond proceeds for permanent supportive housing for people with mental health and housing needs. If approved by voters in November, the bonds would be repaid by funding from the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63 of 2004)
- ***Building stronger mental health capacity at the Department of Health Care Services*** (\$6.7 million) to support oversight of county mental health programs and expenditures, as well as for planning and evaluation of mental health programs.

“The Governor’s proposal to invest in the behavioral health workforce is timely,” remarked Le Ondra Clark Harvey, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for the California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA). “There is a severe behavioral health workforce shortage in our state, and this affects our member agencies’ ability to recruit and retain staff and address access to care issues. We are pleased to see the Governor recognizes the importance of new efforts to strengthen the behavioral health workforce.”

Jessica Cruz, CEO of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) California added, “Homelessness is a growing problem in California, and we are pleased to see a budget proposal making a variety of new investments. People with mental illness are often at high risk of homelessness, and while many current programs are helping, additional investments are sorely needed.”

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