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CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIANS



April 2, 2018

RE: One Year Funding Extension for Statewide Workforce Education and Training (WET) Programs

The Honorable Kevin de Leon
President pro Tempore
California State Senate

The Honorable Toni Atkins
President pro Tempore Elect
California State Senate

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker
California State Assembly

The Honorable Holly J. Mitchell
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review
Committee

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget



Dear Budget Committee Chairpersons and Senate and Assembly Leaders:

This is a request to appropriate \$26, 436, 022 million from the General Fund for the Statewide Workforce Education and Training (WET) Program for Fiscal Year 2018-19. The current Five Year Plan under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) has only been budgeted for four years through the end of June 2018.

Workforce development, which includes recruiting, training and retention of trainees and licensed professionals, is a top priority for the California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA) and other organizations that have endorsed this letter. There has been an increasing demand for services in both the mental health and substance use disorder fields, among others, which has been exacerbated by an increased demand for services created by the inclusion of behavioral health services as an Essential Health Benefit in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This additional demand strained an aging behavioral healthcare workforce that was diminishing faster than it could be replenished. Health service agencies across the state continually struggle to fill open positions to meet demand, but this is especially difficult in the clinical and licensed categories. **The WET funding addressed these issues by providing support for a variety of training initiatives including loan repayment and salary stipend programs – incentives that have shown to help alleviate financial stressors of service providers and encourage them to continue working in rural and urban locations that have traditionally had difficulty attracting service providers.**

While the MHSA allocated WET funding at the local and state levels, the current MHSA Five Year Plan is set to run out of funding after only four years in June 2018. There is broad acceptance in the behavioral health community for the development of a new plan that is comprehensive, sustainable and builds in accountability. More work needs to be done to gather data, learn what was done with the funds, review the outcome, and review best practices. Currently, the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) is working to gather the data from counties to produce a report that will review what has been accomplished over the last four years. **In the meantime, it our belief that allowing a 1-year gap in funding for the WET programs will add to the shortage of health workers, as those who are receiving stipends and loan forgiveness will lose their funding.**

CBHA and the organizations that have signed onto this letter believe that it will be in the best interest of behavioral health providers and consumers to let this plan continue to operate for one year, the original goal of the WET Plan, while data is reviewed and a new long-term plan is developed by OSHPD. The WET Plan has resulted in successful programs, namely various Loan Forgiveness Programs and stipend programs for trainees. These programs, have been identified as a critical element in addressing workforce shortages, especially for clinical providers. If the individual elements of the WET Five Year Plan lapse, it will be much more difficult and expensive to reinstate them.



Therefore, we respectfully ask the Budget Committees to support a one-year extension of the WET programs through the 2018-19 fiscal year. The total approved budget for FY 2017-18 is \$25,436,022 and we request the same amount for FY 2018-19 with an additional \$1 million dollar allotment for OSHPD's administrative fees for a total of **\$26, 436, 022.**

If there are any questions or if I can provide additional information, please contact me at (916) 556-1166 x40 or lclarkharvey@cccbha.org.

On behalf of CBHA and the following organizations in support of this request,

Le Ondra Clark Harvey, Ph.D.
Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs

Additional organizations in support:

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CC: The Honorable Dr. Richard Pan, Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 3
 The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
 Members of the California Senate Budget Subcommittee 3
 Members of the California Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
 Scott Ogus, Consultant, Senate Budget Subcommittee 3
 Andrea Margolis, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
 Ms. Donna Campbell, Secretary, Office of Governor Jerry Brown