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CBHA Urges Speaker Pelosi and Congress to Allocate \$38.5 Billion for Behavioral Health Organizations Nationwide in Next COVID-19 Stimulus Package

SACRAMENTO, CA – The California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA), a statewide association of over 70 non-profit agencies and businesses serving more than 500,000 children, youth, adults and older adults in California who live with mental health and substance use disorders (SUD), today submitted a [request](#) to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) for an emergency appropriation allocation of \$38.5 billion for behavioral health organizations nationwide in the next stimulus package.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations in California that deliver mental health and SUD services, particularly those serving low income individuals, are at risk of collapse. According to a [recent survey](#) of 31 CBHA member agencies that collectively serve more than 210,000 Californians annually, the situation is dire.

- **Lack of protective equipment** - 89 percent lack the necessary PPE, including masks, hand sanitizer and gloves.
- **Decreased staff capacity** – 74 percent have fewer staff available to work due to staff with caretaking responsibilities at home and/or treating their own COVID-19 symptoms or diagnoses.
- **Reductions in revenue** – 52 percent of agencies are serving fewer clients, 39 percent are serving the same amount of clients and 10 percent are serving more. Furthermore, the duration and frequency of services provided has decreased, which decreases revenue to the organization.
- **Furloughs and layoffs** - 32 percent have already instituted furloughs, 10 percent have laid off staff and 14 percent are making plans to furlough or layoff staff.

“The combination of lost revenue, increased costs for staff overtime, lack of personal protective equipment and the need to purchase telehealth equipment is overwhelming the behavioral health system in California,” said Paul Curtis, CBHA Executive Director. “If we do not take steps now to avert the collapse of the system, we can expect hundreds of thousands of individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders to arrive in overtaxed emergency departments across the state. That would be a true disaster, and something we can avert – but only if Congress acts immediately to preserve our ability to respond.”

“California mental health and SUD providers desperately need this funding in order to maintain operations and ensure stability for the duration of the crisis,” said Le Ondra Clark Harvey, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for CBHA. “It also ensures that they are available when the crisis has passed but the effects remain.”

Today's request comes on the heels of a [letter](#) to the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services agency and the Director of the California Department of Health Care Services requesting the establishment of a \$100 million emergency relief fund to stabilize the public behavioral health system.

California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA) is a statewide association of county funded non-profit community agencies who provide behavioral health, housing, social services, education, substance abuse services and vocational rehabilitation services to over 500,000 children, youth, adults and older adults in California.