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## Behavioral Health Advocates Come Together to Respond to Governor Newsom's May Budget Revision

Over the past two years, mental health and substance use disorder has come to the forefront of conversations across America. COVID-19 increased and exacerbated existing inequities in our behavioral health systems of care that disproportionately affect communities of color. It is now estimated over 2.5 million youth in the U.S. have severe depression, and youth from BIPOC communities are at the greatest risk [\[1\]](#). Additionally, fatal overdoses have skyrocketed with over 107,000 Americans dying by overdose in 2021. In response, advocates, the public, and our elected leaders have sounded the alarm.

Today, Governor Gavin Newsom reaffirmed his commitment to addressing the behavioral health crisis in California in his May Revision to the state budget. In the Governor's May Revision, some of the allocations addressing the crisis include:

- \$29.1 million augmentation for substance use disorder provider workforce training at the Department of Health Care Services, for a total of \$51.1 million for this program.
- \$150 million to fund more Homekey projects.
- \$290 million to address the youth mental health emergency.
- \$15 million for the state's Naloxone Distribution Project, with a focus on the unhoused population.

The [California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies \(CBHA\)](#), [California Alliance of Child and Family Services](#), [County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California \(CBHDA\)](#), [California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives](#), and [California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals](#) joined together to release the following statements:

"The California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA) commends Governor Gavin Newsom for his steadfast commitment to the behavioral health of all Californians, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Administration to reform and shape the behavioral health system," said Dr. Le Ondra Clark Harvey, Chief Executive Officer of CBHA. "In the Governor's May Revision, the Administration is making significant investments in the infrastructure of mental health and substance use

services, including funding for workforce initiatives to bolster the pipeline and reimagine crisis response allowing California to care for the growing behavioral health needs in our state."

"The California Alliance of Child and Family Services applauds Governor Gavin Newsom and his Administration's dedication to addressing the alarming youth behavioral health crisis that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has only amplified," said Christine Stoner-Mertz, CEO of the CA Alliance. "The investments made in youth behavioral health in the 2022-23 May Revision are a critical step in the right direction, and the CA Alliance will continue to work closely with our partners in behavioral health to ensure that investments in youth are sustained as there is increasing demand on budget resources."

"County behavioral health agencies are at the core of two of the state's biggest priorities: homelessness and the youth mental health crisis. We are heartened to see the acknowledgement that more work needs to be done to address the county funding aspects of CARE Court as there will be no winners in CARE Court if the state does not fund our expanded duties and provide expanded housing resources for this new program," said Michelle Doty Cabrera, Executive Director of the County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California. "In addition, county behavioral health agencies and our contracted providers have been on the front lines of the youth mental health crisis and we applaud the state's proposed investment in trying to prevent and address the youth mental health crisis through targeted May Revision investments."

"The California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives applauds the Governor's commitment to address the overdose crisis by building upon the already historic investment in January by doubling the substance use disorder provider workforce training investment, tripling the funding to expand the distribution of lifesaving naloxone, and a public awareness campaign on youth opioid and fentanyl risk education. This can not come at a more critical time as overdoses have skyrocketed during the pandemic and the need for services has grown," said Tyler Rinde, Executive Director of the California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives.

"The Governor's commitment to investing in behavioral health treatment, in particular, substance use disorder treatment, is nothing short of historic," said California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals President and CEO, Pete Nielsen. "Today is truly a new day for those suffering from addiction in California. With the staggering increase in overdose deaths related to fentanyl makes this a crucial time and we thank the governor for the focus on Naloxone distribution, fentanyl public awareness campaign, and substance use disorder provider workforce training as outlined in the Governor's May Revision."