



## **CMHDA/CADPAAC Joint Policy Statement**

### **Regarding Proposed State Department Reorganization**

In response to the Administration's proposal to eliminate the Dept. of Mental Health (DMH) and the Dept. of Alcohol & Drug Programs (ADP), and to seek stakeholder input on where the necessary responsibilities performed by those departments should be transferred within state government, the California Mental Health Directors Association (CMHDA) and the County Alcohol & Drug Program Administrators Association of California (CADPAAC) offer the following comments:

CMHDA and CADPAAC support a single state agency or division for Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder services that would preserve the integrity of both fields. Mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) services would each maintain a distinct identity, while collaborating on integrated services at the state and local levels – not only integrated co-occurring services for MH & SUD, but also integration of both fields with primary care. This model would be akin to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Wherever our services end up being “located” in state government, there is agreement that we need strong statewide voices on MH and SUD policy. Also, given the additional responsibilities assumed by counties under realignment, we need leaders at the state level who will work with counties and support county structures. Effective leadership requires Director or Deputy Director-level leaders who:

- Are equally experienced and articulate in both MH and SUD issues, who have demonstrated knowledge and credibility in MH & SUD and will be strong statewide advocates for both fields;
- Have the ability to move our fields forward in health care reform;
- Can provide direction across all state departments that are affected by MH & SUD;
- Understand and can address federal issues (especially federal Maintenance of Effort requirements), and can develop linkages to federal structures;
- Can improve administrative efficiencies and provide common solutions to information technology implementation.
- Will be strong voices in addressing cultural disparities.

CMHDA and CADPAAC support the preservation of the MH & SUD continuum of care, including prevention, treatment, recovery, continuing care, reentry services, etc. Our fields have too often developed outside of the traditional health care system, largely because of their identification as criminal justice issues. The fact is, mental illness and substance use disorders are the major health issues of our time. Eliminating a department does not eliminate the problem. Undiagnosed and untreated MH & SU disorders drive the preventable costs of the medical care system, child welfare system, criminal justice system, and others. The goals of health care reform cannot be realized without a strong and comprehensive system of care for both fields.



Patricia Ryan  
Executive Director, CMHDA



Thomas Renfree  
Executive Director, CADPAAC