

# Pursuing the Vision of Wellbeing for All

March 2021

## Summary

The Commission's portfolio of collaborative projects and grant programs are key elements of a [strategic plan for transforming mental healthcare](#) in California. These projects provide expertise and resources to help counties and community partners address unmet needs, improve results, and reduce racial and ethnic disparities. More specifically, these projects are advancing the priorities of the Mental Health Services Act – including reducing school failure, incarceration and hospitalization – and illuminating how MHSOAC Innovation funds can transform services and lives.

## The Portfolio of Projects

California's size and diversity has made it difficult to develop effective community-based mental healthcare across the state. The traditional approach of trying to balance state and local control has not produced the coordination and alignment required for innovation in services and continuous improvement in results.

The Commission's strategy recognizes that breakthroughs happen when state actions are aligned with community efforts to connect mental healthcare with early learning and schools, with supportive housing and employment, with justice systems. The strategy also recognizes that most public programs are defined by complex and rigid rules, and public agencies often lack the technical capacities and organizational cultures for innovation and performance management.

The Commission, with support from the Governor and Legislature, has launched several multi-county collaboratives and incentive-based grant programs to support learning, capacity building and partnerships among community-level agencies striving to meet the challenging needs of individuals.

## Early Psychosis Prevention and Early Intervention

**Early Psychosis Learning Health Care Network.** Six counties – Los Angeles, Napa, Orange, San Diego, Solano and Sonoma – teamed with the University of California, Davis to develop an Innovation Plan designed to improve and expand efforts to detect and respond to the first symptoms of psychosis. Early intervention can significantly improve long-term outcomes by reducing the severity and consequences of symptoms and disease progression. The project is deploying a data-informed approach to support learning and program development, and a statewide evaluation to assess consumer and program-level outcomes. A \$100,000 investment by the Commission leveraged \$9.3 million in MHSOAC Innovation funds from counties, which was matched with \$1.5 million in philanthropy and \$5 million in federal funding.

**Early Psychosis Plus.** Building on the learning network, the Legislature in 2017 passed AB 1315 (Mullin), creating the Early Psychosis Intervention Plus program to expand high-quality, evidence-based early psychosis and mood disorder detection and intervention services. The Commission in 2020 allocated \$10 million to Kern, Lake, San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Sonoma counties to improve community specialty care services and is consulting with an advisory committee on allocating another \$5.5 million. Some \$3.9 million was dedicated to training and evaluation. The project includes private sector partners exploring ways to encourage insurance plans to include their enrollees in the learning network.

**Youth Drop-In Centers.** The Commission worked with Santa Clara County and Stanford University to adapt an internationally recognized model that provides a safe place and connection to services for youth with mental health needs. In 2020, the Commission allocated \$14.5 million for technical assistance and Youth Drop-In services for two centers in Los Angeles county and centers in Orange, Sacramento and San Mateo counties.

**Youth Innovation Project.** The Commission in 2018 launched the Youth Innovation Project and established a Youth Innovation Project Planning Committee – 14 youth from 12 counties are developing concepts for youth-centered innovation projects with the potential for improving services, support and outcomes for youth. In three “Idea Labs” youth are presenting to county officials their best ideas for addressing their mental health needs. More than 200 youth from Imperial, Kern, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, Solano, Ventura and Yolo counties have participated in the Commission-sponsored Idea Labs.

### **Triage Crisis Grants and School Mental Health**

**Crisis planning.** SB 82 of 2013 created the Investment in Mental Health Wellness Act to improve crisis services. In 2014 the Commission allocated \$96 million to 24 counties in “Triage” grants to strengthen community responses to mental health crises. Nearly all those county-defined projects included law enforcement partners and criminal justice diversion strategies.

**Children and Youth.** Based on community priorities, the Commission in 2018 allocated \$82 million in Triage grants to support adults, transition-age youth and children. Half of those funds went to children’s services – and half of those funds went to four county-school partnerships.

**Mental Health Student Services Act.** Building on this momentum, the Legislature in 2019 enacted the Mental Health Student Services Act. The Commission in 2020 allocated \$75 million to 18 county behavioral health departments to develop partnerships with schools. Grants will support suicide prevention, drop-out prevention, service referrals and outreach to high-risk youth, including foster youth, youth who identify as LGBTQ, and youth who have been expelled or suspended from school, or are at high risk for criminal justice involvement.

**2020-21 Triage grants.** The Commission in the coming months will establish priorities and criteria for another \$60 million to \$80 million in grants.

### **Innovation Incubator / Criminal Justice**

In 2018 the Commission was provided \$5 million to develop new ways to reduce the number of people with mental health needs in the criminal justice system, and in particular the number found incompetent to stand trial. In 2019 and 2020, the Commission launched six multi-county collaboratives:

**The Data-Driven Recovery Project.** Five counties are linking criminal justice and behavioral health data to better understand the needs of individuals with mental health needs in the criminal justice system. These counties are deploying data-informed practices and piloting new strategies: Sacramento, San Bernardino, Nevada, Plumas and Yolo.

**Data-Driven Recovery Project Second Cohort.** In 2020, five more counties joined the data project, some of them to specifically link to work with the Judicial Council to divert defendants with mental health needs into services: Calaveras, El Dorado, Lassen, Marin and Modoc.

**Full-Service Partnerships.** Six counties are evaluating and refining their Full-Service Partnerships (FSP) to improve the results from this “whatever it takes” approach. More than \$1 billion is spent annually on FSPs statewide. Fresno, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Mateo, Siskiyou and Ventura are working together to assess their programs and develop metrics to support improvement efforts.

**Psychiatric Advanced Directives.** Three counties are exploring options to deploy advanced directives to improve the response to individuals who are in crisis from law enforcement, as well as physical and behavioral health workers: Fresno, Orange and Sutter-Yuba counties.

**Crisis Now.** Eleven counties are developing comprehensive and financially sustainable crisis response systems designed to better meet the needs of individuals and reduce incarceration and hospitalization: Butte, Inyo, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Solano, Shasta and Yolo.

**Fiscal Sustainability.** Three counties are assessing the effectiveness of interventions to reduce justice-involvement of individual with mental health needs and developing strategies for improving performance and financial sustainability. All three counties received significant one-time funds from the Department of State Hospitals: Sacramento, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara.

The Commission’s **Incubator Systems Analysis** is assessing the learnings across the incubator projects, working with county leaders to develop a continuous improvement framework to inform future county Innovation projects, and assessing how the Commission can better support innovations in the counties.

These insights and tools have been shared statewide through a series of webinars by Words to Deeds in late 2020 and early 2021. Follow up technical assistance is being coordinated with the Center for State Government’s Stepping Up Initiative and is also being provided through a series of workshops on Screening and Assessment for Behavioral Health Needs in CA Jails.

### **Innovation Incubator / COVID-19 Response**

The Legislature in the 2020-21 Budget Act provided the Commission with \$2,020,000 “to support innovative approaches, in partnership with counties and other entities, to address mental health needs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Commission has engaged with state and local partners, consumers and families and other stakeholders to identify how it can best help county behavioral health agencies and their community-based service providers to adapt to the three-fold challenge of (1) meeting the changing and increasing mental health needs associated with the pandemic, (2) providing services in ways consistent with public health requirements, and (3) sustaining essential services with declining revenues.

During its meeting on January 28, 2021, the Commission considered a proposal for this funding guided by a process implemented by Commission staff to explore urgent needs. This process found that the pandemic has worsened pre-existing disparities in access to quality care and has put tremendous stress on young people and their families due to the loss of traditional school supports, the isolation associated with quarantining, and the economic distress that has particularly impacted low-income, racial, and ethnic communities.

After reviewing this information, the Commission directed staff to address disparities in access to effective and culturally appropriate behavioral health services as well as the increased suicide risk that

youth are experiencing which are directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the Commission authorized staff to invest in activities that:

1. Support the replication of the Solano County Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Cultural Transformation Model (ICCTM) Innovation Project.
2. Engage county behavioral health leaders on the opportunities to adapt, extend, and replicate the work of the California Reducing Disparities Project.
3. Further strengthen the Commission's school mental health work with an emphasis on youth suicide risk and prevention.

The Commission is working with our partners to finalize this work in the coming weeks.

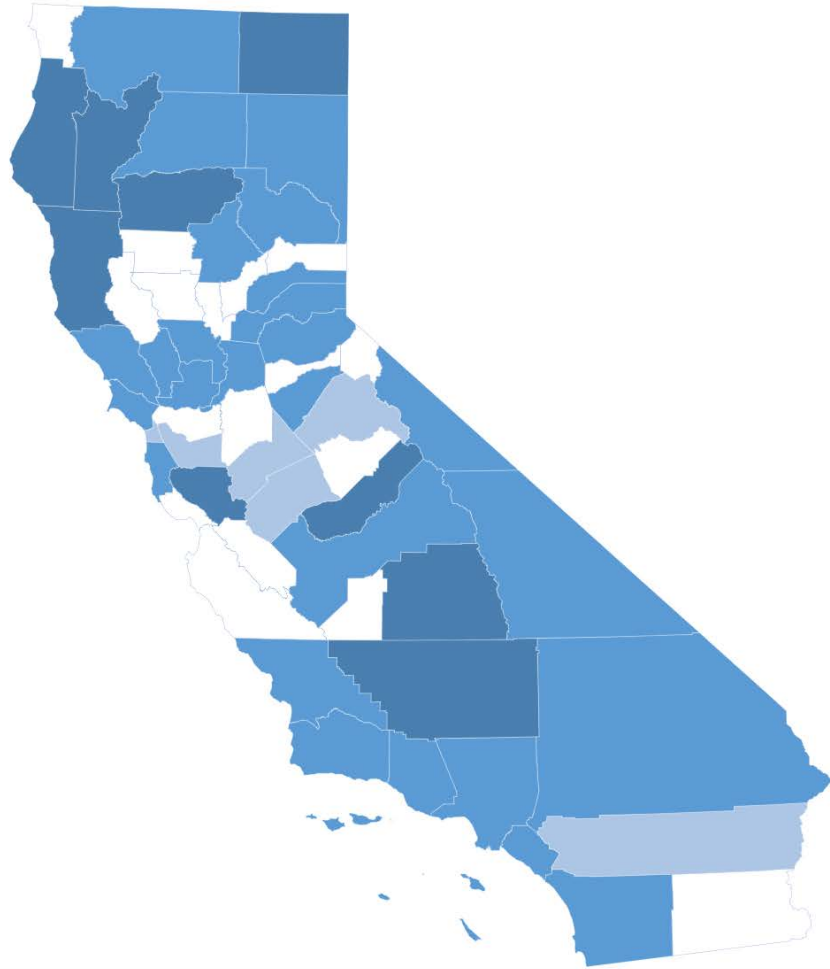
### **Achieving Statewide Impact**

These projects are designed to build capacity and support innovation and the adaption of services with significant potential to improve outcomes for Californians with mental health needs. They also are designed to increase learning within and across the communities, and to inform state policy actions that can catalyze system-level changes.

The map on the following page shows the counties that have participated in the Triage, Mental Health Student Services Act and Innovation Incubator projects, illustrating the potential for the strategy to have statewide impact.

# MHSOAC Projects & Grants Distribution

■ Triage - 17 Counties ■ INN - 26 Counties ■ MHSSA - 19 Counties



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