

Coalition Advocating for Rights Empowerment and Services

CARES Members
PAI - Protection & Advocacy, Inc.
CNMHC - California Network of Mental Health Clients
CASRA — California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies
CAMHPRA - California Association of Mental Health Patients Rights Advocates

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The CARES Coalition¹ strongly opposes any actions that will use funds from the Mental Health Services Act to establish or support involuntary treatment. Such actions not only violate both the letter and spirit of the Act, they will also damage the trust of key stakeholders and divide the mental health community.

The goal of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) is to allow for a transformation of California's mental health system, modeled on the voluntary tenets of the recovery philosophy. It offers a vision of a system that will create and make available options that maximize client autonomy and self-determination. Involuntary treatment is inconsistent with the recovery model and accordingly, with the MHSA. Involuntary treatment deals with mental health issues in a traditionally unsuccessful manner; it is not transformative. The MHSA promises a new direction for mental health services; not the same old methods.

During the campaign to pass Proposition 63, we and others representative of the mental health community were assured that the Act could not and would not be used to fund involuntary services. Based on these assurances we mobilized our constituents and joined others to promote and support Proposition 63. Allowing MHSA funds to be used to support involuntary treatment at this juncture will destroy the consensus of the mental health stakeholders that promoted the Act, and will create dissension and animosity among stakeholders and county/state administrators. It will also serve to damage, if not destroy, the trust of the people whom the Act is supposed to benefit.

The MHSA can only succeed in its goal to transform California's mental health system if it continues to have the support and cooperation of the mental health community. To preserve the trust and cooperation of the CARES Coalition and other key stakeholders, we request that you notify the counties that MHSA funds

¹ California Network of Mental Health Clients (CNMHA), California Association of Mental Health Patients' Rights Advocates (CAMHPRA), California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies (CASRA) and Protection & Advocacy, Inc. (PAI).

cannot be used to establish or support involuntary treatment. We applaud you for establishing the reduction of involuntary treatment as a goal of the MHSA and request that you require counties to demonstrate how their MHSA services reduce or eliminate involuntary treatment. Finally, we ask that the actual reduction or elimination of involuntary treatment be a key benchmark against which the effectiveness of MHSA programs is measured.

Sincerely,

Sally Zinman, Executive Director, California Network of Mental Health Clients
Dave Vandenberg, President, California Association of Mental Health Patients'
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Betty Dahlquist, Executive Director, California Association of Social
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