

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. **What is Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)?**

Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, was a voter initiative passed in 2004, which expanded California's public mental health programs and services through funding received by a one percent tax on incomes in excess of \$1 million. Counties use this funding for prevention and early intervention, community supports and services including "whatever it takes" treatment for serious mental illness, workforce development and training, innovation, plus capital facilities and technological needs through projects and programs.

2. **What problem was Prop 63 intending to address?**

At the time Prop 63 was created, mental health services in California were found to be inadequate for a rapidly growing number of people residing in the state. As such, many Californians living with mental illness found themselves in the criminal justice and judicial systems, or in emergency rooms.

3. **What is the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC)?**

The MHSOAC is a non-paid, 16-member Commission established by Prop 63 to provide oversight, accountability and leadership on issues related to mental health in collaboration with clients, family members and unserved and underserved communities. The Commission holds regular public meetings focused on a variety of issues that impact the mental

health field, including funding, client and family member involvement, cultural competency, eliminating disparities in services and outcomes, and evaluation of mental health programs. These meetings give many individuals throughout the state the opportunity to have their voices heard on mental health issues most important to them.

4. **What is the role of the MHSOAC in Prop 63?**

The Commission provides oversight and accountability of California's public mental health system, with particular attention to Prop 63. The MHSOAC is charged with ensuring that Prop 63 services are provided in accordance with recommended best practices subject to local and state oversight, as well as ensuring that the perspective and participation of individuals suffering from severe mental illness and their family members is a significant factor in all Commission decisions and recommendations. The MHSOAC is also responsible for developing strategies to overcome stigma and discrimination; increasing access to services for unserved and underserved populations; and reducing the negative outcomes of untreated mental illness such as suicide, incarceration, homelessness, school failure, unemployment and prolonged suffering. Through ongoing evaluations, the Commission also strives to assure California taxpayers that Prop 63 is producing efficient outcomes. The MHSOAC reviews all county Prop 63

MHSA plans and updates; and approves Innovation programs.

5. What is the status of Prop 63 implementation?

To date, approximately \$8 billion in Prop 63 funding has been collected and continues to be distributed at the local level for expanded and enhanced mental health services and supports.

6. Has Prop 63 been successful?

The Prop 63 funded evaluation, conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Healthier Children, Youth and Families in May 2011, found positive outcomes associated with participation in Community Services and Supports (CSS) programs. The report showed substantial reductions in homelessness, arrests, incarcerations and acute psychiatric hospitalizations for most age groups. At the same time, the number of consumers and number of days spent in independent or residential living situations *increased*, particularly for children, TAY, and adults.

The same study showed reductions in homelessness of 82 percent for young adults and 67 percent for adults. Psychiatric hospitalizations or ‘mental health emergencies’ were reduced by 88 percent for children, 86 percent for young adults, and 90 percent for adults. Reductions were also seen in arrests: 74 percent for adults, 78 percent for young adults, and 98 percent for older adults.

An October 2012 study by the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities found that Full Service Partnerships (FSPs), also part of CSS, are resulting in significant cost savings. The study found that FSPs result in a cost savings of \$1.27 for every Prop 63 dollar spent. About 21,000 new clients were enrolled in FSPs in California during the two years studied, with a 22 percent increase in enrollment in year two. Full Service Partnerships provide a “whatever-it-takes” approach for people with serious mental illness; treatment may include psychiatry, medical care, therapy, housing, job or life skills training.

7. How is the economy impacting mental health funding?

Our communities are facing extraordinary fiscal challenges right now. Prop 63 provides an opportunity for counties to continue to make available those services and supports to mental health clients most in need. A local “prudent reserve” has been established, as required by Prop 63.

8. What are MHSOAC’s future plans?

As time progresses, the Commission will continue its focus on oversight and accountability of Prop 63 funding, while also performing a statewide evaluation of Prop 63 related programs and funding uses to measure their effectiveness, impacts on the mental health system, and the effects programs are having on clients and family members who use Prop 63 services