

Sample Letter to State Legislators

Dear _____ :

The Governor has once again underestimated the dire need for mental health services in California. He ignores the preventable costs of untreated mental illness, especially those costs that could have been avoided with early intervention in programs such as those supported by funds from the Mental Health Services Act. Instead, his misguided budget proposal attacks people living with mental illness and seems oblivious to the fact that these cuts will leave people living on the edge no other option for services or even survival.

The Governor's funding shifts and 'trigger' threats couldn't come at a worse time as the economic recession has increased demand for mental health services and as previous budget cuts have left our fragile mental health system as the last resort for tens of thousands of Californians who desperately need access to care and shelter.

The proposal dismisses voters' clear intention to specifically direct MHSA dollars to expand mental health services to more people in need – a will the voters expressed when they passed the Act in 2005, and confirmed when they rejected Prop 1E on the May 2009 ballot.

The Governor's proposal will foolishly cost the taxpayers more in the long run, through increased emergency room visits, expensive institutional care, and in criminal justice costs. As my representative in Sacramento, I urge you to talk with your fellow legislators and resist giving in to the Governor's tactics. Give us a budget that is not balanced on the backs of people who are most vulnerable.

Sincerely,