

California's Investment in Prevention and Early Intervention: Fact Sheet

The goal of the Prevention and Early Intervention component of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) is to help counties implement services that promote wellness, foster health, and prevent the suffering that can result from untreated mental illness. These efforts involve collaboration with consumers and family members in the development of prevention and early intervention projects and programs to support the effective delivery of services.

Prevention and early intervention efforts target individuals at risk of, or showing early signs of, mental illness or emotional disturbance and links them to treatment and other resources. Through this work, counties can support partnerships with schools, justice systems, primary care, and a wide range of social services and community groups that are accessible to the community.

The MHSA defines specific purposes for prevention and early intervention:

- Prevent mental illness from becoming severe and disabling
- Improve timely access to mental health services for underserved and unserved populations
- Reduce seven negative outcomes associated with untreated mental illness

Seven Negative Outcomes

The MHSA, under its Prevention and Early Intervention component, identifies seven specific negative outcomes that can be addressed through effective programs. These programs emphasize strategies to reduce those negative outcomes for individuals and populations whose risk of developing a serious mental illness is greater than average, and for individuals with early onset of potentially serious mental illness. These negative outcomes include:

Incarcerations

School failure

Unemployment

Prolonged suffering

Homelessness

Suicide

Removal of children from their homes

Prevention and Early Intervention Funding

The Mental Health Services Fund comes from a one percent tax on annual personal income over \$1 million. Ninety-five percent of the funds received are distributed to local mental health agencies to expand services in five components:

- Community Services and Supports
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Innovation
- Workforce Education and Training
- Capital Facilities and Technological Needs

Twenty percent of funds that the counties receive must be committed to prevention and early intervention programs to support a shift of California’s mental health system toward a recover-oriented “help-first” strategy and away from a crisis-oriented “fail-first” response to serious mental illness.

The following graphic provides an overview of how MHSOAC funds are distributed:

