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## Public Engagement Opportunities Announced to Advance Mental Health Policy

*State's Mental Health Commission seeks input from community members  
to advance prevention and early intervention in mental health.*

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For immediate release  
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SACRAMENTO – The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission's Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Subcommittee today announced a series of opportunities open to the public to engage in the development of information, which will be used to guide the Commission's findings and conclusions.

"Strategies that advance prevention and early intervention have tremendous potential to reduce negative mental health outcomes, reduce disparities, and improve the collective wellness of communities," said Commission Vice Chair and PEI Subcommittee Chair, Mara Madrigal-Weiss.

Since 2019, the Commission has been working to explore statewide opportunities to advance prevention and early intervention in mental health, which was initiated by [Senate Bill 1004](#) (Wiener). The Commission's PEI Subcommittee, led by Madrigal-Weiss and vice chaired by Commissioner Mayra Alvarez held public meetings in late 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Consistent with other health outcomes, we recognize that risk to mental wellbeing is influenced by a combination of individual, environmental, and social factors, that not

only threaten a person's wellbeing but also create barriers to accessing needed services," said Madrigal-Weiss.

In 2020, the Subcommittee partnered with cultural brokers to hold virtual listening sessions with members of African American, Asian Pacific Islander, Latinx, LGBTQ+, and Native American communities. Participants in the listening sessions highlighted the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate services that recognize the unique challenges and strengths of their communities and honor their histories and values while increasing accessibility and awareness and reducing stigma.

Beginning in February, the Commission is seeking additional input from community members through several events, open to the public including **regional listening sessions** across the state where members of the broader regional community are invited to share their experiences and learn more about the Commission's project goals. In addition, the Commission will offer **a virtual forum series** to explore opportunities for using data and technical support to advance implementation of effective PEI programs and services.

The public is also invited to join and comment during **two public hearings** to be held during regularly scheduled Commission meetings in February and April that will highlight presentations by subject matter experts.

Visit the Commission's website at [mhsoac.ca.gov](http://mhsoac.ca.gov) for a schedule of events, and more information about how to attend.

## Interview Opportunities by Request

*Mara Madrigal-Weiss* – Commission Vice Chair; PEI Subcommittee Chair; Schools and Mental Health Subcommittee Member; Director Student Wellness & Positive School Climate and Foster & Homeless Youth Education Services, San Diego County Office of Education

*Toby Ewing* – Executive Director, MHSOAC

## About the Commission

In enacting Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, California voters in 2004 created and charged the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission with the responsibility of driving transformational change in public and private mental health systems to achieve the vision that everyone who needs mental health care has access to and receives effective and culturally competent care. The Commission was design to empower stakeholders, with members representing consumers and their families, service providers, law enforcement, educators and employers. The Commission puts consumers and families at the center of decision-making. The Commission promotes community collaboration, cultural competency and integrated service delivery. The Commission is committed to wellness and recovery, using its authorities, resources, and passion to reduce the negative outcomes of mental illness and promote the mental health and wellbeing of all Californians.