



ADVANCING PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION IN MENTAL HEALTH

PROJECT OVERVIEW FEBRUARY 2021

MHSOAC
Mental Health Services
Oversight & Accountability Commission



Prevention and Early Intervention in Mental Health

Many people experience challenges to their mental wellbeing, yet not all have equitable access to supportive information and resources. Left unaddressed, mental health needs can escalate over time, requiring higher levels of support and potentially leading to negative long-term outcomes that impact not only individuals themselves, but also the families and communities that support them.

Consistent with other health outcomes, risk to mental wellbeing is influenced by a combination of individual, environmental, and social factors. Chronic and episodic exposure to poverty, trauma, isolation, marginalization, un/underemployment and inadequate health care not only threaten a person's wellbeing but also create barriers to accessing needed services. At the same time, having appropriate resources,

supportive social networks, and tools for managing stress and emotions can significantly increase a person's resilience.

Prevention and early intervention (PEI) in mental health requires a combination of efforts to strengthen these protective factors and reduce risk while ensuring timely access to services as mental health challenges emerge. In doing so, strategies that advance PEI have tremendous potential to reduce negative mental health outcomes, reduce disparities, and improve the collective wellness of communities.

Prevention and Early Intervention Project

Since 2019, the **Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability 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 project is led by the Prevention and Early Intervention Subcommittee, which is chaired by Commissioner Mara Madrigal-Weiss and vice chaired by Commissioner Mayra Alvarez. The Subcommittee held public meetings in late 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

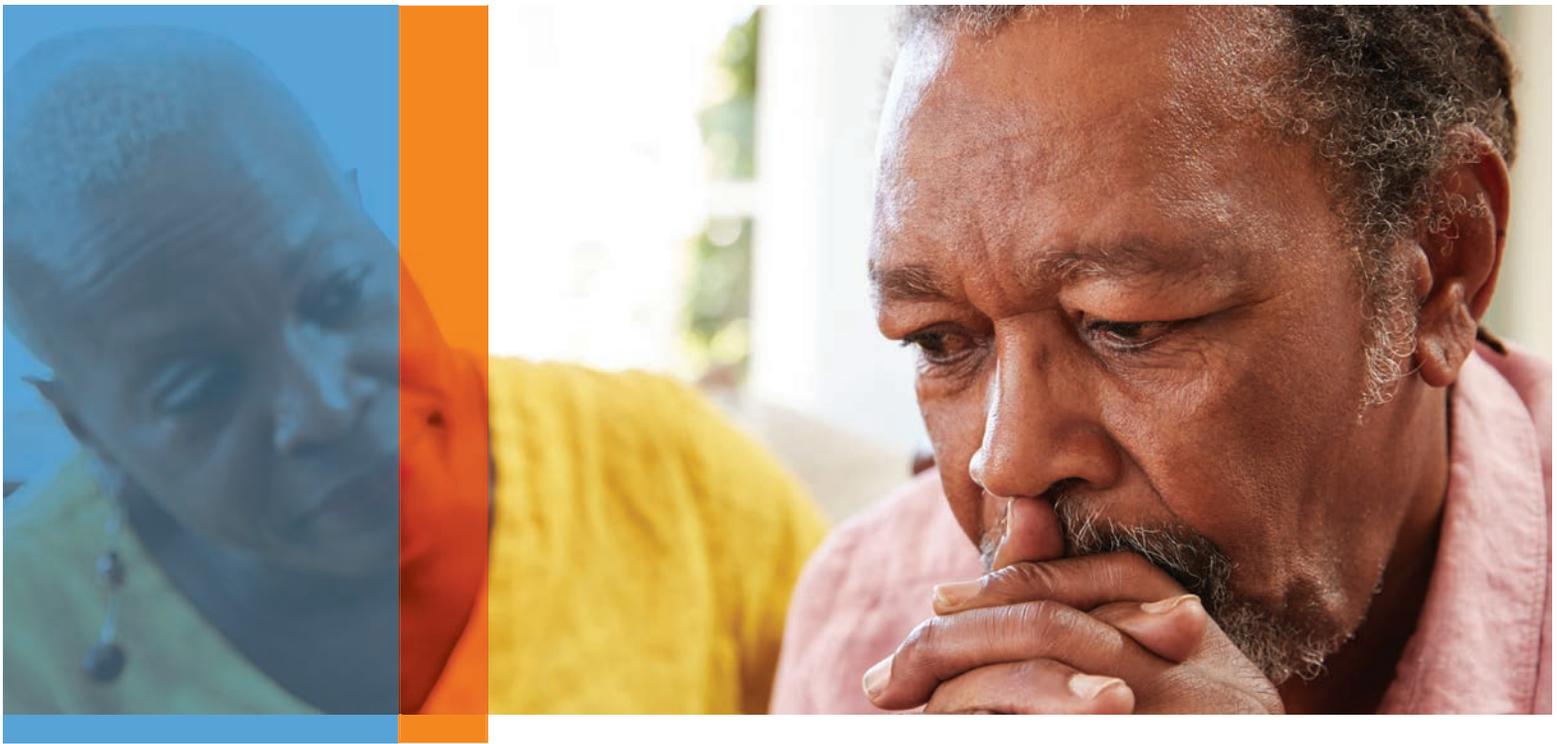
Since then, the Subcommittee partnered with cultural brokers to hold virtual "listening sessions" to obtain input from members of African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latinx, LGBTQ+, and Native American communities. Participants in the listening sessions highlighted the need for culturally 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.

In addition to these sessions, Commission staff are conducting qualitative analyses of prevention and early intervention programs and services to describe the characteristics of programs currently delivered by local behavioral health departments. A series of briefs are also in development, highlighting several avenues to advance opportunities in early childhood, improve timely access to services, and accelerate best practices in early psychosis intervention.

There is a need for services that recognize the challenges and strengths of their communities while increasing accessibility and awareness.

Project Next Steps

The Commission's Prevention and Early Intervention Subcommittee is seeking input from community members in its effort to advance prevention and early intervention in mental health. Below is a brief overview of several opportunities open to the public to engage in the development of information, which will be used to guide the Commission's findings and conclusions. Visit www.mhsoac.ca.gov for full event details.



Listening Sessions

Several virtual listening sessions have been organized by region across the state. These two-hour sessions include opportunities for community members to share their experience with wellness in their communities, in addition to hearing general information about project goals.

- **February 12, 2021**, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Superior Region
- **February 22, 2021**, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Bay Area Region
- **March 1, 2021**, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Southern Region
- **March 3, 2021**, 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Los Angeles County
- **March 8, 2021**, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Central Region

Forum Series

Virtual forums have been organized to explore opportunities for using data and technical support to advance the implementation of effective PEI programs and services.

- **March 17, 2021**, 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. | *Using measures of mental health risk and protective factors to support strategic planning and program delivery*
- **March 24, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. | *State and local evaluation of Prevention and Early Intervention activities delivered by the Mental Health Services Act*
- **April 5, 2021**, 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. | *Opportunities to reduce the negative consequences of mental health needs*

Public Hearings

Public hearings during regularly scheduled Commission meetings will feature presentations by subject-matter experts. These hearings include time for public comment.

- **February 25, 2021**
Key concepts in prevention and early intervention
- **April 22, 2021**
Opportunities for prevention and early intervention across the lifespan

Contact Amanda Lawrence, Ph.D., at amanda.lawrence@mhsoc.ca.gov for more information.