

AB 860 (Cooley)
Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission:
Fact-Finding Tours of Non-Public Facilities

Bill Summary

AB 860 strengthens accountability of mental health services by allowing the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission to visit non-public facilities when gathering information in support of their oversight duties.

Problem

Current law requires that any location where the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission conducts a fact-finding tour be open to the general public. However, many Californians with mental health needs receive services in locations that are not open to the public, including locked mental health facilities, schools, jails, and prisons, making it difficult for the Commission to gather information about services provided behind closed doors and discharge its oversight duties effectively.

Solution

California's mental health system needs effective oversight to ensure positive outcomes for individuals, whether services are provided in public or non-public facilities. To that end, AB 860 allows the Commission to conduct fact-finding tours of locations not open to the public, in support of conducting their oversight duties. AB 860 requires the Commission to make a summary of its fact-finding tours available to the public and maintains that any meetings held or decisions made by the Commission be done in open locations so the public may attend and keep informed.

Background

The Bagley-Keene Act of 1967 facilitates transparency of government deliberations by requiring all meetings for California agencies, boards, and commissions be open and made public.

In 2004, California voters passed The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) that established the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission – an independent entity charged with providing oversight and accountability to the public mental health system. The intended outcomes of the MHSA include reducing incarcerations, school failure, unemployment, suicide, suffering, and prolonged homelessness for those in need of mental health services.

The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission is under the purview of the Bagley-Keene Act, making it difficult for the Commission to visit non-public facilities for the purposes of gathering information in support of their oversight duties.

Support

- Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (Sponsor)

For More Information

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