



AGENDA ITEM 4

Information

Population-Based Prevention Discussion

Item Goals

- Discuss how prevention is changing as part of the transition to the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), as well as California's overall Behavioral Health Transformation.
- Understand how state and local experts, as well as providers, are approaching population-based prevention as the public behavioral health system focuses on severe mental illness, serious emotional disturbances, substance use disorders, and co-occurring disorders.
- Explore how community members can further engage to help inform and shape California's behavioral health prevention policy.

Behavioral Health Landscape

- The BHSA moves the responsibility for prevention from counties to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) with a mandate for population-based prevention.
 - A minimum of 4% of the BHSA funding is allotted to CDPH for Population-Based Prevention and at least 51 percent of the funds must be used for populations who are 25 years old or younger.
 - Population-based prevention programs must incorporate evidence-based practices or promising community defined evidence practices.
- The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) now oversees county implementation of BHSA early intervention efforts. DHCS also has authority to define outcome measures for early intervention and identify evidence-based practices in consultation with the Commission.
- CDPH is currently developing their Population-Based Prevention Program Framework. They published Phase I in July 2025 and Phase II in October 2025.

Relevant Commission Work

- The Commission published “Well and Thriving: Advancing Prevention and Early Intervention in Mental Health” in May 2023 as part of the requirements of Senate Bill 1004 (Chapter 843, Statutes of 2018).
- Two current Commission grant programs strongly support prevention:
 - Grants through the Mental Health Wellness Act focus on preventing behavioral health challenges from worsening, including the maternal behavioral | health/0-5 grant to support the wellbeing of the youngest Californians and the older adults grant to support skill-building for older adults to prevent major behavioral health challenges.
 - Behavioral Health Student Services Act grants perform a variety of prevention functions by supporting wellness and behavioral health programs in schools.