

## The California Stakeholder Process Coalition

**Who is the CSPC:** The California Stakeholder Process Coalition is comprised of individuals who are also members of the Mental Health Services Act Partners Forum, a statewide stakeholders' group focused on mental health services for all people of California. In the AB 100 Work Group that formed in 2011 to analyze AB100 changes, statewide community and government partners together recognized and prioritized the need to strengthen and ensure the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement as an essential element of quality improvement and accountability. Community stakeholders are asking for the continuing partnership of government entities in fulfilling this important priority. The CSPC is working to ensure the inclusion and participation of all diverse stakeholder groups in mental health services planning and implementation processes. The goal of the group is to promote and improve stakeholder processes at the local and state levels throughout California by:

- Ensuring respectful and meaningful engagement of clients and family members, and representatives of underserved racial, ethnic, and cultural communities across the age span;
- Ensuring adherence to MHSA values, compliance with laws and transparency of decision-making; and
- Ensuring effective, efficient, and responsive program implementation at local levels.

**Our Concern:** As a result of the state's recent fiscal realignment, most MHSA programs that were until recently subject to approval by state mental health agencies are now proposed to be approved by county boards of supervisors. Without adequate checks and balances, stakeholder engagement and access to needed and necessary mental health services are at risk. Thus our three areas of concern are the need for: meaningful stakeholder engagement, accountability of counties to stakeholders, and evaluation of processes to ensure a fair and inclusive effort.

### Placeholder language

*"Counties will demonstrate a partnership with constituents and all relevant stakeholders through an engagement process (to be developed) that includes meaningful stakeholder involvement on mental health policy, program planning and implementation, monitoring, evaluation, quality improvement and budget allocations. As part of the County Mental Health Plan, Counties and Stakeholders will develop measures to document not only level of stakeholder participation but also their endorsement of the quality of mental health service coordination and delivery, and will update this assessment at regular intervals to assure quality improvement"*

### Meaningful Engagement is:

- An inclusive, proactive, respectful and transparent process to gather stakeholders' ideas, feedback, recommendations and concerns.
- A collaboration where clients' and family members' priorities lead the agendas, with bi-directional and ongoing information sharing, and creative problem-solving efforts if disagreements or other barriers occur.
- A commitment to clarity about what the plan or agreement actually entails.

### Accountability to Stakeholders is:

- A commitment by counties to use the stakeholder process to help design new services and improve and transform current services, including current, MHSA-designed programs, and a commitment to use the results of evaluation of the stakeholder process to improve it if needed.
- An ongoing process in which an independent, state-level entity or structure is instituted and adequately funded to oversee MHSA planning and implementation in order to ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement through adherence to and promotion of MHSA values; compliance with local, state, tribal and federal law; and transparency as to how MHSA funds are used and how and why decisions are made vis-à-vis stakeholders' recommendations and concerns.
- The use of performance contract monitoring, qualitative and quantitative measures and enforcement mechanisms, remedial training and technical assistance to ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement. Inclusive of a state-level issue resolution process to enable any stakeholder the opportunity to resolve issues safely and effectively.

**Evaluating the Efforts means:** Regular evaluation of engagement and levels of participation to determine:

- The extent and quality of their participation.
- The costs and benefits of participation from the respective communities.
- The impact of their participation on individual, program and system outcomes, performance, and sustainability.

### Solving this issue would require:

- Legislation to provide framework and enforcement for a stakeholder process.
- Eliminating institutional barriers.
- Regular evaluation of stakeholder engagement and levels of participation to determine intensity, cost and impact.

### Consequence of not addressing this concern:

- Stakeholders will remain largely silenced, excluded from the opportunity to impact their own lives and prevented from inciting positive change for themselves and their communities.
- Mental health disparities will expand.
- The quality, effectiveness and good outcomes of services will be less than they could be.
- The MHSA's promised transformation of the system to one based on wellness, recovery and resilience, integrated service experience and collaboration that is client- and family-driven, culturally and linguistically competent will not occur.