



LINDA MAIO
Councilmember
District 1

CONSENT ITEM
June 11, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Maio and Arreguin
Subject: Support CA State Senator Steinberg's Proposal for Mental Health Care Improvements

RECOMMENDATION

Support Senator Steinberg's proposal for Mental Health Care improvements.

BACKGROUND

Mental health has become center stage given recent events (a Berkeley homicide by a mentally ill person and the heart breaking events in Connecticut). That is a good thing. It has focused attention on a system of response that is broken and woefully lacking. As a result we find mentally vulnerable people are on our streets, homeless and victimized, or they are incarcerated. The County is working on a plan to increase services, which we should see shortly. Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg has released a proposal to improve mental health care in the State. Implementation of the proposal would take place over two years, and would, Steinberg contends, reduce recidivism and the prison population. About 10,000 current parolees (20% of the full parolee population) have been diagnosed with mental illness.

- The proposal adds 2,000 residential crisis treatment beds to be used in lieu of costly emergency room care.
- 200 mental health triage personnel would be hired to help arrange services such as housing, mental health treatment, and education for mentally ill individuals.
- 25 Mobile Crisis Support Teams would be utilized to help obtain short-term crisis care for individuals at homeless shelters, jails and clinics.
- The Integrated Services for Mentally Ill Parolees program which provides transitional support to recently released inmates would be expanded from serving 1,500 people to serving 5,000. Participants in the program had a 24% recidivism rate last year, much lower than the 75% recidivism rate for parolees that didn't participate in the program. Funding would be utilized from a variety of sources, including from the Affordable Care Act, Mental Health Service Act funds (Prop 63), county realignment funds, and the State General Fund.

While the federal Affordable Care Act, coupled with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, provide enormous potential and opportunity for increased behavioral coverage, we need to acknowledge that access to mental health treatment services and support is a substantial barrier.

Adults with mental health needs were 1.5 times more likely to have a co-occurring chronic disease (high blood pressure, heart disease, or asthma) or to be diagnosed with two or more of these chronic conditions as compared to the general population. Further, individuals with severe mental health disorders served by public mental health systems have rates of co-occurring chronic conditions two to three times higher than the general population, with a corresponding life expectancy of 25 years less.

The Steinberg proposal offers a good start at addressing this population's special needs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

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