

California Psychiatric Association 2010 Policy Platform

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PLATFORM STATEMENTS

1) Quality of Care

Advocate for patients to receive the highest quality of care. Advocate best practices and promote the utilization of nationally recognized professional treatment guidelines. Promote the establishment of performance and outcomes measures to ensure accountability.

2) Access to Safe, Integrated, and Competent Psychiatric and General Medical Care

Promote uniform standards of medical education to ensure the safe, integrated and competent medical treatment of mental illness. Help improve access to competent medical care for all Californians by advocating for more psychiatric residency training capacity, general availability of telepsychiatry, expansion of efforts to train and support primary care physicians, and support for increasing the numbers of psychiatric specialist nurse practitioners and physician assistants. Work to establish fee schedules and levels of reimbursement that are adequate to promote physician participation in public and private service delivery programs. Work to establish effective incentives at the state or local level to encourage providers to work in underserved areas.

3) Non-discriminatory Insurance Coverage for Mental Illnesses

Work to ensure true parity of access to competent psychiatric and substance abuse care in both public and private managed care settings. Work to create a managed care environment that is patient and physician friendly. Work to reduce the regulatory burdens imposed on patients and physicians by managed care practices.

4) Medications

Support provision of safe and effective medications as recommended for patients by competently trained medical professionals: physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. Advocate for physician involvement in the development of any mandated formularies or medication prescribing algorithms. Support the right of patients to have full access to information on medications for their conditions, and full access to information about any restrictions to obtaining those medications. Support the ability of physicians to prescribe those medications that they believe will be most effective. Support efforts to reduce the cost of medications for patients and health care systems. Work to ensure provision of a full range of effective medications for patients in health maintenance organizations, local and state public mental health systems, prisons, and jails.

5) Services for Children and Adolescents

Work to increase collaboration between State and county level departments of mental health, social services, probation, educational institutions, and regional centers. Ensure that funding for children's services is preserved or expanded, and that the process of access to funding sources is streamlined. Increase access to local systems of care for children placed out of county. Seek to promote early diagnosis and treatment for all children, including foster children.

6) Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act – MICRA

Protect the integrity of the California medical malpractice law in order to assure that physician resources are directed to providing medical care and not to prohibitively high insurance premiums.

7) De-Criminalize Mentally Illness

Advocate for adequate funding for the public mental health system so that un-treated and under-treated individuals with mental illness do not by default end up in jails and prisons. Support programs that divert those who would not have committed crimes except for their illness from the criminal justice system into treatment. Advocate for adequate psychiatric care for mentally ill prisoners and detainees of the juvenile justice system, including modern medication. Assure that the severely mentally ill and sexual predators are separated in facilities and that medical disorders are not confused with anti-social behavior. Encourage police training on the subject of mental illness.

8) Violence Prevention

Support legislation that embodies reasoned regulatory action relating to violence. Support legislation that discourages the purchase of handguns and places strong controls on availability of all types of firearms to private citizens. CPA's focus on domestic violence acknowledges the

negative psychiatric impacts of domestic violence and positive impacts of domestic violence prevention. Focus on prevention of school violence through removing disincentives to the identification and treatment of severely emotionally disturbed children who may potentially be violent.

9) Co-occurring Substance and Alcohol Abuse

Work to increase access to and improve the quality of treatment provided to persons with a serious mental illness who also have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. Work to decrease funding silos that isolate mental health and substance abuse treatment. Work to promote and increase funding for integrated treatment programs.

10) Public Mental Health System/including foster children

Support actions that help assure access, effectiveness, quality, integrity and adequate funding for, the public mental health system, including funding for medical services necessary to permit appropriate utilization of psychiatrists. Necessary medical services include laboratory testing and primary care consultation. Continue to support and advocate for a full spectrum of outreach and social services necessary for addressing the needs of homeless mentally ill individuals. Support full implementation of programs for assisted outpatient treatment. Advocate for mentally ill offender treatment programs. Support actions to assure that all programs measure relevant performance and outcomes.

11) Community Housing

Support the development of affordable and decent housing in the community for those with mental disorders. Advocate for supported housing and the provision of community based, comprehensive care that allows treatment in the community and in homes.

12) Suicide Prevention

Work actively with other organizations to significantly reduce the rate of suicide by promoting treatment for mental disorders, creating awareness in the legislature and public that suicide is a preventable public health issue, coordinating state and local government agencies, and advocating in support of suicide prevention policies.

13) Seclusion and Restraint

Work with other organizations to improve the laws and practices governing seclusion and restraint to assure patient and staff safety.

14) Psychiatric Leadership

Work to insure institutional support for medical and psychiatric leadership in all health care systems in which mental illness is addressed.

15) Insufficient Hospital and Step-down residential Capacity

Work towards the amelioration of the shortage of inpatient psychiatric beds. Work to ameliorate the lack of adequate capacity in the existing mental health system to provide alternative residential care for those patients with more severe and urgent needs for care. Advocate a

proper balance between open and locked facility resources. Work to provide capacity in county of residence, particularly for children and adolescents.

16) Confidentiality and Patient Privacy

Work to protect patient confidentiality by advocating for actions that ensure that the highly sensitive material contained in medical records is protected from inappropriate disclosure. Work to ensure that legitimate purposes for access do not include personal information when aggregate, i.e. non-personally identifiable information, would suffice. Work to educate policy makers and the public that confidentiality of medical information is prerequisite to high quality medical care.

17) Integrated Care Programs

Advocate for effective administrative, programmatic, and fiscal integration of Healthcare (psychiatry, general medical care, and substance abuse services) in order to promote better care. CPA supports changes in governmental regulation and industrial practices that accomplish such integration in ways that ensure the appropriate access to quality psychiatric and substance abuse services.