



PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) is one of five components of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). PEI provides key strategies to transform California's mental health system. Prevention in a mental health context, involves reducing risk factors or stressors, building skills, and increasing support to prevent the initial onset of a mental illness. Prevention promotes positive cognitive, social, and emotional development and encourages a state of well-being where individuals who are at risk, can function well in the face of change and often challenging circumstances.

What are "Prevention & Early Intervention Services"?

The *Prevention* element of the MHSA PEI component includes programs and services that are designed to help prevent the development of serious emotional or behavioral disorders and mental illness. *Early Intervention* is directed toward individuals and families for whom a short-duration (usually less than one year), relatively low-intensity intervention is appropriate to measurably improve a mental health problem or concern very early in its manifestation, thereby avoiding the need for more extensive mental health treatment or services; or to prevent a mental health problem from getting worse. PEI funding is *not intended* for filling gaps in treatment and recovery services for individuals who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness or serious emotional disturbance and their families.

Prevention and Early Intervention efforts focus on addressing five key community mental health needs and specific priority populations including:

- Disparities in Access to Mental Health Services
- Psycho-Social Impact of Trauma
- At-Risk Children, Youth and Young Adult Populations
- Stigma and Discrimination
- Suicide Risk

Local PEI Funds

In Orange County, an extensive community needs assessment was conducted in 2007-08, in which views of many different individuals and groups were solicited. These were integrated into the original PEI plan containing 33 programs divided among eight projects. The PEI Plan was restructured in FY12/13 based upon lessons learned during the first three years of implementation. No services were eliminated, but some programs were combined to avoid duplication. The services are now provided via 23 programs grouped into three Service Areas entitled Community-Focused Services, School-Focused Services, and System-Enhancement Services. Projected expenditures for each of the next three fiscal years are estimated at approximately \$29 million per fiscal year.

PEI Statewide Projects

Orange County has assigned PEI statewide projects funds to the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to support an agreement between DMH and CalMHSA/Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to administer the Suicide Prevention, School-based Mental Health Initiative, and Stigma and Discrimination Reduction statewide projects. Orange County is a member of a JPA that conducts the planning, project development, and oversight of program partners implementing the programs in those three categories on behalf of its members. There are two additional statewide PEI projects: Technical Assistance and Capacity Building, which is funded through direct allocation to counties. The fifth statewide project, Reducing Disparities, is being overseen by the Department of Public Health (DPH) Office of Health Equity and is underway.