



HISPANAS
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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HOPE Supports Prop 1 to Increase Behavioral Health Services and Workforce Investments for Diverse Communities

SACRAMENTO, CA (Tuesday, February 13, 2024) – Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) announces support for Proposition 1 which will be before California voters on the March 5th ballot. HOPE supports this effort because, among other things, Proposition 1 intends to transform the delivery of critical behavioral health services and invest in the behavioral health workforce to support Californians with the greatest needs.

HOPE has been a strong advocate for increasing behavioral health services for Latinas and other underserved communities across the State. Latinx and Black Americans, young people, women, and those with low incomes are most at risk of mental health challenges and are the populations most burdened by the social determinants of health.

California voters established the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) in 2004, creating a revenue source that helped California build out essential community-based mental health services for underserved communities. Despite this progress, many Californians are still facing significant barriers to accessing care and compounding factors like homelessness, substance abuse and severe mental health conditions present modern challenges that are not being addressed by our current system.

In a [survey conducted by UCSF](#), 4 out of 5 unhoused Californians reported experiencing a serious mental health condition at some point in life, and those with current mental health conditions reported limited access to treatment. According to a [recent study](#), the numbers of Latinx individuals experiencing homelessness rose nearly 8% at the national level and 26% in Los Angeles County alone. And data shows that homelessness does not occur in a vacuum; it occurs in tandem with a lack of investment in critical services that leaves our communities vulnerable to conditions like substance use disorders and is exacerbated by existing barriers to accessing mental health services.

Prop 1 addresses this intersection of the unhoused and mental health by renaming the Mental Health Services Act to the Behavioral Health Services Act and restructuring the breakdown of the funding to help build supportive housing, increase

the behavioral health workforce, and expand community-based services. It also includes a bond measure to expand behavioral health treatment centers and build more housing, including specific targeted resources for veterans.

HOPE has called for the need for targeted workforce investments that increase the representation of Latinas in the behavioral health field. Our [California Equity in Mental Health Survey](#) notes that our current health and mental health care delivery and support systems have not been designed or equipped to support the needs of Black women and Latinas. According to the Medical Board of California, only four percent (4%) of active psychiatrists practicing in California are Latino and only two percent (2%) are Black. Proposition 1 addresses this issue by ensuring that 35% of the MHSAs funds support workforce education and training as well as behavioral health services and support. A minimum of 51% of these dollars must be directed towards early intervention support for Californians who are 25 years and younger.

“The status quo is not an option, and while Prop 1 is not a perfect solution, it updates the MHSAs to reflect the present challenges that our communities are facing in accessing care,” said *HOPE CEO Helen Torres*. “The work to transform our behavioral health system does not end with Prop 1; we must remain vigilant to ensure that the transformative vision of this measure is realized in a way that does not cut critical community-based services for underserved populations.”

HOPE remains committed to the goal of expanding access to behavioral health services for Latinas and other marginalized communities and if Proposition 1 passes, HOPE looks forward to engaging our state legislators and regulatory partners to hold the State accountable to its promise of increasing supportive services for our most vulnerable Californians.

About Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) - HOPE® is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has empowered our communities through advocacy, Latina leadership training, and increasing knowledge on the contributions Latinas have made to advance the status of women for the past 32 years. To date, HOPE’s innovative programming has served 65,000 Latinas and touched the lives of several thousand more through our advocacy. For more information on HOPE, please visit Latinas.org or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).