



AB 1134: Mental Health Fellowship

Summary:

Assembly Bill 1134 (AB 1134) ensures that the needs of mental health clients are being met by providing them an opportunity to engage in the policy-making process. AB 1134 authorizes the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission to establish a fellowship program for a mental health consumer and a mental health professional.

Background:

In 2004, California voters approved Prop 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The MHSA was designed to support and encourage system-wide change in California's public community mental health system. It imposed a 1% tax on taxable personal income above \$1 million to provide funding for the expansion of mental health services. This created a dedicated funding source for much needed mental health programs.

The Mental Health Oversight and Accountability Commission (the Commission) was created to oversee the implementation of MHSA. Its mission is to hold public mental health systems accountable and ensure they are eliminating disparities in services, collaborating with families, and promoting the recovery and resiliency of clients. It is responsible for developing strategies to overcome the stigma associated with mental illness. Additionally, it may advise the California Legislature or Governor on mental health policy.

California has a history of paid fellowships for public health professionals, such as the California Department of Public Health, but unfortunately none exists for the Commission.

The Commission's fellowship will provide mental health professionals with the opportunity to work at the state level and gain experience they can use to enhance their careers. Many positions with state agencies require previous professional experience at the state level, but unfortunately only those with financial support can afford to intern or work without pay to gain that initial experience.

The fellowship program is an extension of the Commission's mission. Its establishment will serve the purpose of providing an experiential learning opportunity for participants. The lived experiences of individuals with mental illness will ensure that the Commission has client input when developing policies that affect them.

AB 1134 authorizes the Commission to create the first mental health fellowship program in California and provides opportunities for participants to work on mental health policy projects.

This bill:

Specifically, this bill:

- Authorizes the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission to establish the first paid mental health fellowship for a mental health consumer and a mental health practitioner in California

Support:

- Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (Sponsor)

Contact:

Jennifer Lopez

Office of Assemblymember Todd Gloria

Jennifer.Lopez@asm.ca.gov | 916.319.2078