

**California Health and Human Services Agency
Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative
May Revision 2021-22**

Proposal: Transform California's children and youth behavioral health (BH) system into a world-class, innovative, up-stream focused, ecosystem where ALL children and youth are routinely screened, supported and served for emerging and existing BH needs. Services are statewide, evidence based, culturally competent, and equity focused. \$4 billion over five years, including \$2.3 billion one-time and \$300 million General Fund and certain federal matching funds ongoing starting in 2022-23.

Why and Why Now?

- Serving young people and doing it well pays off. Half of all lifetime cases of diagnosable mental illnesses begin by age 14 and three-fourths of all lifetime cases of diagnosable mental illness begin by age 25.
- Historically the adolescent substance use disorder system in California has been under-resourced and under-scaled. The need has never been greater.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has intensified already swelling children's BH issues. Addressing these needs is vital to California's recovery.
- The state's children's BH system is inadequate to meet current needs. There is too little focus on prevention, too few programs, too few behavioral health professionals, too few emergency services, and too few acute care services and beds.
- The most glaring BH challenges are borne inequitably by communities of color, low-income communities, LGBTQ+ communities, and in places where adverse childhood experiences are widespread and prominent.
- The state has the resources now to take a statewide, comprehensive approach to this persistent service gap and major long-term state problem. The opportunity to build a true system of care for all 0-25 year old Californians will change the arc of the lives of the next generation of Californians having the potential to alter the drivers of homelessness, incarceration and poverty.
- This proposal takes advantage of significant one-time investments to create tremendous opportunity for long-term impact on Californian's future community leaders.

Major Components:

- Develop and support a Behavioral Health Service Virtual Platform that would provide all children and youth (0-25 years old) with access to virtual behavioral health services and interactive tools and supports.
- Support the development and sharing of evidenced-based practices to improve outcomes for children and youth at high risk for mental health conditions with a focus on efforts that are tailored for disproportionately impacted communities and communities of color.
- Build-up of MH and SUD beds and facilities to provide in-person services when needs intensify.
- Enhance Medi-Cal benefits by adding Dyadic services, a model of providing care to children in a family-based screening and treatment model.
- Build capacity to increase the number of students receiving school-linked preventive and early intervention behavioral health services.
- Expand the availability of school-based behavioral health counsellors and coaches.
- Expand the overall behavioral health workforce to meet the needs of children and youth.
- Create a public education campaign to reduce the stigma on behavioral health needs and encourage children and youth, and their families, to seek needed care before a crisis, and to build a common understanding of ACEs and toxic stress.