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Newsom Administration Launches Focus on Supporting Californians' Behavioral Health Needs Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

Sacramento, CA – The County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California (CBHDA) applauded Governor Newsom's focus on Californians' behavioral health as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic uncertainty, social isolation, and school closures have resulted in stress, anxiety and other emotional effects on children, adults, families, and older Californians. CBHDA released the following statement from Executive Director Michelle Doty Cabrera today:

"Californians are likely already feeling the effects of the stress related to this global pandemic in terms of their mental health or the need for support around substance use disorders. County behavioral health directors greatly appreciate Governor Newsom's recognition of the behavioral health toll Californians are feeling as a result of this pandemic and the physical distancing measures enacted to slow its spread.

"As we work together to address the physical health aspects of this pandemic, it is important to acknowledge the parallel behavioral health epidemic which is resulting from the public health crisis and will continue as an ongoing need. County behavioral health departments are on the frontlines providing for the mental health and substance use disorder service needs of vulnerable Californians served by the public behavioral health system. Our counties operate many of the crisis and warm line resources linked to on the state's COVID-19 resource site and stand prepared to link Californians to trusted behavioral health resources."

"Given the unique emotional needs of children, Surgeon General Nadine Burke-Harris' unparalleled leadership on issues of trauma and adverse childhood experiences are a tremendous asset to our state as we confront the monumental challenge of COVID-19. We look forward to helping deploy the Surgeon General's 'playbooks' and resources for children, adults and caregivers.

"As Governor Newsom noted, paying attention to our emotional health will help Californians build the resilience and recovery supports needed to weather this crisis. To that end, California's county behavioral health departments stand ready to partner with the Governor, Surgeon General, and Administration to support Californians and our state's behavioral health recovery."

Resources for emotional support and wellbeing: <https://covid19.ca.gov/resources-for-emotional-support-and-well-being/#top>

Manage stress for health: <https://covid19.ca.gov/manage-stress-for-health/>

California Surgeon General's Playbook: Stress Relief for Caregivers and Kids during COVID-19:
https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/caregivers_and_kids_california_surgeon_general_stress_busting_playbook_draft_v2_clean_ada_04072020v2.pdf

The County Behavioral Health Directors Association is a statewide non-profit association that represents all 58 county behavioral health directors and two city mental health programs (Berkeley and Tri-City) which is dedicated to advocating for public policy and services on behalf of people who are living with substance use disorders and mental illness.

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