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CSAC Issues Statement on Proposed Mental Health Services Act Reform

Sacramento, CA – *The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Chief Executive Officer Graham Knaus today issued the following statement responding to Senate Bill 326.*

"The time to thoughtfully reform the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) has come," said Graham Knaus, California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Chief Executive Officer. "But imposing rigid changes and requirements on one of California's most volatile revenue streams for behavioral health services virtually guarantees failure."

"Unfortunately, as drafted, the proposal will reduce funding for current behavioral health services and jeopardize core mental health services for all ages, such as outpatient services, crisis intervention, outreach, and recovery services," Knaus said. "Reducing funding for behavioral health services will take us backward and worsen the crisis in our communities."

Knaus added, "Counties are seeking flexibility to empower our communities and address the spectrum of workforce, infrastructure, and community partner network challenges as well as each county's ability to navigate the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in federal matching funds while continuing to provide critically needed services."

SB 326 could be significantly strengthened by heeding three targeted county requests:
- Preserve funding for core behavioral health services, including existing services for children and youth;
- Insert fiscal protections to address adequacy and volatility of the funding stream; and
- Narrow the bill to focus exclusively on MHSA reform, limiting the proposal to provisions that will be presented to voters on a future statewide ballot.

See the full County letter outlining the above requests here.