



*Working together for ourselves, our families and our community.*

NAMI-SCC National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

*Santa Cruz County*  
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June 18, 2002

Senator Bruce McPherson, Gray Davis, and Fred Keeley  
State Capitol, Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Davis:

We are the families of those suffering from severe and persistent mental illness. We are writing to respectfully request that you do not support the Governor's Budget Revision that seeks record cuts in mental health funding..

In 2000-2001, the State Senate began its budget by preparing a document entitled Mental Health, Under-funded from the Start. This report recognized that for decades mental health funding had been ignored and mentally ill children and adults have been neglected, leading to enormous and rapidly growing caseloads in jails, hospitals, prisons, group homes, special education and juvenile justice programs.

In that same year, the Senate responded by proposing a \$300 million increase in mental health funding, a significant step. The Governor's May revise and the final budget signed by the Governor were only about half of that but it still represented the most significant increase in mental health spending in the state's history. For that, I commend the Governor and the Legislature for their foresight.

However, the rush to find ways to cut spending the Governor's May Revision this year sets another record-**THE BIGGEST CUT IN MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING THE STATE HAS SEEN SINCE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS WERE STARTED IN THE 70's.**

The cuts of nearly \$100 million not only are devastating in dollar amounts but cut primarily the most cost-effective programs - the programs most likely to directly translate into recovery from serious emotional disturbance and severe mental illness and offsetting savings in criminal justice, special education, out of home placement and other costs.

It should be clear that the state WILL NOT, in the Short Term or in the Long Term, save any money from cutting nearly \$100 million from mental health programs. A more accurate way of gauging these cuts would be to match them with caseload increases spread across Medi-Cal, state prisons, special education, out of home placements in foster care and other programs which will bear the brunt of the elimination of Children's System of Care and the 25% reduction in the combined Adult System of Care and AB 34 Integrated Services Programs.

We recognize the need to spread cost "fairly" across the board. However, there are few other program areas where the Legislature has so clearly acknowledged and state studies have so clearly documented that they were 1) significantly under-funded, and 2) cost-effective in producing savings that offset increased expenditures. For all these reasons, We strongly encourage you to reject these crippling and unfair cuts to a system that is already at its breaking point.

Sincerely,

*The members of The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-Santa Cruz County*