

Excellence in Mental Health Act

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1. What is the Excellence in Mental Health Act?

The Excellence in Mental Health Act (the Excellence Act) is a federal law passed in 2014. It is part of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act. The point of the Excellence Act is to increase quality community mental health and substance use treatment services. It allows states to create **Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)** during a two-phase **demonstration program**. It helps states create a **prospective payment system** to improve CCBHC provider reimbursements. Even though it is early, it will put about \$1.1 billion in the mental health system. This makes it the biggest federal investment in mental health and substance use treatment services in generations.

2. What is a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic?

A **Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC)** is a type of health clinic. The law requires that these clinics have a broad range of services for people with mental health disabilities and substance use disorders.

CCBHCs must have these mental health services:

- Crisis mental health services, including 24-hour mobile crisis teams, emergency crisis intervention, and crisis stabilization
- Screening, assessment, and diagnosis, including risk management
- Patient-centered treatment planning
- Outpatient mental health and substance use services
- Primary care screening and monitoring
- Targeted case-management
- Psychiatric rehabilitation services

- Peer support, counseling services, and family support services
- Services for members of the armed forces and veterans
- Connections with other providers and systems (primary care, education, child welfare, criminal justice, foster care, hospitals, etc.)

CCBHCs must follow strict standards of care, staffing, and accountability. For example, CCBHCs must be staffed with licensed people who are trained in person-centered, recovery-oriented, and culturally competent care. They must provide services at convenient times and places. They must offer services even if a person cannot pay.

3. What is the Excellence Act's Demonstration Program?

A **demonstration program** is a special project to test the law. **The Excellence Act's Demonstration Program** allows states to have CCBHCs that follow the new criteria and test how well CCBHC services work. The Demonstration Program has two parts:

1. Phase I – Planning Grant Phase: Grants were awarded to 24 states. These 24 states will use their grants to develop CCBHC clinics and create plans for how they will run. Grant applications for Phase II are due by October 31, 2016.
2. Phase II – Two-Year Demonstration Program: Eight of the 24 states will be selected for Phase II. During Phase II, CCBHCs in eight states will provide mental health and substance use treatment services and be paid using a **prospective payment system**. During the second phase, CCBHCs will be funded to give services for two years.

4. Did California get an Excellence Act Planning Grant?

Yes. California's Excellence Act Demonstration Program is in its first phase. California was awarded \$982,373. California is using its grant to develop CCBHC clinics that meet the law's criteria. California will apply for Phase II.

5. What is a Prospective Payment System?

A **Prospective Payment System (PPS)** is a way to figure out how much to pay CCBHC providers. Under this system, their pay is decided in advance and is a fixed price. The Excellence Act allows states to pick one of two PPS rate systems depending on what works best for the state. This means for the first time ever, CCBHC providers can be paid the real cost of mental health, substance use, and basic primary care services.

6. Is the Excellence Act a step toward mental health parity?

Yes. Mental health parity means equal coverage for both physical and mental health care. For many years, Federally Qualified Health Centers received federal funds for physical health care services. Mental health centers did not get the same federal funds—until now. The Excellence Act makes sure mental health centers are more equal to physical health centers. It improves standards and expands access so more people can get the care they need. Building on the success of Federally Qualified Health Centers, the Excellence Act is a step towards mental health parity.

We want to hear from you! After reading this fact sheet, please take this short survey and give us your feedback.

English version: <http://fs12.formsite.com/disabilityrightsca/form54/index.html>

Spanish version: <http://fs12.formsite.com/disabilityrightsca/form55/index.html>

Disability Rights California is funded by a variety of sources, for a complete list of funders, go to <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/Documents/ListofGrantsAndContracts.html>.

The PEI Statewide Project is Prop. 63-funded programs aimed at preventing suicides, reducing stigma and discrimination, and improving student mental health.

Phase I of the PEI Statewide Project, from 2011 to 2015, implemented programs through three initiatives: suicide prevention, stigma and discrimination reduction, and student mental health.

Phase II of the PEI Statewide Project, from 2015 to 2017, continues the three initiative efforts with an added focus around four wellness areas (diverse communities, schools, healthcare, and workplace) to achieve broad activities that reflect a public health/population based approach for advancing community change.

The PEI Statewide Project:

- Is voter-approved and funded for by counties through the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63)
- Transforms California's mental health services approach by uniting California's diverse communities to embrace mental wellness and delivering the tools individuals need before they reach the crisis point
- Provides an up-front investment that will pay off with sustained cost reductions in health, social services, education and criminal justice programs
- Is implemented as a coordinated effort by California's counties for maximum statewide impact and cost effectiveness

The California Mental Health Services Authority (CaMHSA) is an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. Prevention and Early Intervention Programs implemented by CaMHSA are funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63).

Prop. 63 provides the funding and framework needed to expand mental health services to previously underserved populations and all of California's diverse communities.



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