

California Behavioral Health Task Force Meeting



Quarter 1 Meeting Focus (January 2026)

California is making historic investments in behavioral health. This meeting focused on how state departments are working together to strengthen the full continuum of care.

The core question guiding the discussion: How do we ensure California's behavioral health investments translate into real access, outcomes, & equity across communities?

During the discussion, a shared understanding emerged: Most challenges are not about whether services exist—they are about whether people can access them in time, navigate them easily, and see themselves reflected in them.

Highlights from the Presentation

- **DHCS:** Expanding services and funding to strengthen evidence-based and community-defined practices
- **HCAI:** Building and supporting the behavioral health workforce
- **DMHC:** Ensuring plans provide timely, equitable coverage
- **CDPH:** Conducting prevention, public awareness, and data tracking

- **~4,000 Certified Wellness Coaches trained statewide**
- **99% of Medi-Cal members can access mobile crisis care**
- **10,600+ placed in stable housing**

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What Members Surfaced:



Access gaps persist despite system expansion. Services remain difficult to navigate, with uneven implementation across counties limiting consistent access.



Peer and recovery services remain unstable despite being critical to long-term outcomes.



Prevention and early intervention need stronger investment. Upstream strategies are recognized, but not consistently funded.



Workforce shortages and retention challenges continue, especially in underserved areas and high-need roles.



Behavioral health data is not timely or accessible enough, limiting the ability to respond quickly and scale what works.



Federal and funding uncertainty pose risks, including potential cuts to key behavioral health services.

Key Takeaways

Transformation across systems is the next phase of this work:

State, counties, health plans, schools, and community providers



Accountability + data will define success:

Clear metrics and transparency are needed to track progress