CA Mental Health Commission Convenes in Riverside to Hear Public Testimony About Stigma

Mental Health clients and families whose loved ones live with mental illness will give testimony about the effects of stigma and discrimination on their lives during a public hearing Thursday.

Time: 3 to 6 p.m.
Date: Thursday, April 12, 2007
Location: Mission Inn Hotel, 3649 Mission Ave. Riverside

A study by the U.S. Surgeon General in 1999 concluded that public stigma against mental illness deprives people of their dignity and an opportunity to participate in community activities, jobs and housing. Clients and family members in the mental health system say it is one of the most significant barriers to recovery.

The hearing is being convened by the state’s mental health Oversight and Accountability Commission to help plan for spending $80 million in Prop. 63 money to combat stigma and discrimination against the mentally ill.

Proposition 63 was passed by voters in November 2004 to augment the chronically underfunded public mental health system. It levies a 1 percent tax on personal income above $1 million. The proposition requires money be spent on specific issues, including combating stigma and discrimination.

Several mental health advocacy groups are expected to testify at the hearing including the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI).