FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 19, 2008

California Mental Health Commission to Tour Skid Row with Senator Ridley-Thomas

Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas will host the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) on a tour of several Skid Row neighborhood sites on Wednesday evening, Feb. 20. The MHSOAC will visit the Para Los Ninos Youth Center, the Union Mission, the Midnight Mission and will take a walking tour of the area.

The MHSOAC will be announcing that the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) currently has over 38 million dollars in funding available for MHSA Housing Program Subsidies for Los Angeles County. The MHSA Housing Program is providing funding for the development of permanent, affordable rental-housing units with support services for the homeless, or those who are at risk of homelessness, with a mental illness and their families.

The California Department of Mental Health plans to allocate Los Angeles County approximately $115 million dollars over the next three years for the development of supportive housing.

"We want the public to know that these Mental Health Services Act housing resources are available for use for the homeless," said Linford Gayle, Chair of the MHSOAC. "By adding these state resources to the current Los Angeles County efforts to reduce homelessness, we can work to reduce the suffering of people on Skid Row," Gayle said.

"Homelessness and mental illness are inextricably linked together," said Senator Ridley-Thomas. "Providing housing for the mentally ill is one of the first steps in addressing mental illness, and the Mental Health Services Act will be instrumental in developing solutions for this problem."

The MHSOAC will be at the following locations at the approximate times listed:

- Para Los Ninos Youth Center, 6th and Gladys, LA. at 6:30 pm
- Union Mission, 545 San Pedro, LA, 90013. at 6:50 pm
- Walking Tour at 7:05 pm.
- Midnight Mission, 601 San Pedro, LA, 90013. at 7:25 pm.
The 16-member MHSOAC state commission was formed by the passage of Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), in November 2004. The MHSOAC is responsible for oversight and accountability for implementation of the MHSA.

The MHSOAC will be having a meeting on Thursday, Feb. 21, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Friday, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, at the Hilton Los Angeles Airport, 5711 West Century Blvd., Los Angeles. This MHSOAC meeting is part of the Commission’s meetings around the state to conduct business where the public can have access to the Commission and where it can bring information regarding mental health oversight and accountability to the public.

Contact: Cynthia Craft
(530) 363-5702
Cynthia.craft@dmh.ca.gov