



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE

## [California Mental Health Services Authority](#)

For Immediate Release

Thompson

May 10, 2016

7280

Contact: Jenna

(916) 444-

# **Mental Health Month Provides Opportunity to Break Down Mental Health Stigma for Latino Community**

**\*see below for Latino mental health resources\***

**Sacramento, CA** – Mental Health Month offers opportunities to break down barriers to mental wellness and help California’s diverse communities attain education, health, and professional and personal outcomes. Encouragingly – a new report from researchers at the RAND Corporation finds that the vast majority of people experiencing psychological distress who were surveyed from California’s diverse communities felt it was possible to recover from mental health challenges. However, these findings also demonstrated that mental health disparities still remain.

The new RAND report finds that Latinos surveyed in Spanish are less likely to seek services for help with a mental health concern, which may be linked to negative attitudes toward mental illness.

This study analyzes data from the California Well Being Survey, and is the first to take a comprehensive look at racial and ethnic differences in

perceptions of mental health problems and stigma among a representative sample of individuals experiencing psychological distress. The findings offer insight and information policymakers and advocates can use to craft programs that can reduce stigma among Latino communities, which can in turn improve access and utilization of mental health services by Latinos.

“California has begun investing in the kinds of programs that can move the needle when it comes to perceptions of mental illness, but more work needs to be done to address ongoing stigma in Latino communities,” said Dr. Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, Director of the UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities. “When people with mental health challenges feel accepted rather than excluded and isolated, we can create a state of better mental health in California, and reduce the toll untreated mental health problems have on California’s communities especially those underserved such as Latinos.”

Through the voter-approved Proposition 63, California counties produced a wide array of culturally and linguistically responsive mental health resources for the Latino community to help break down the barriers that deter Californians from accessing timely help that meets their unique needs:

[SanaMente.org](http://SanaMente.org): *SanaMente: Movimiento de Salud Mental de California* connects individuals with resources created for, and by, the Latino community. The selected Spanish term for *Each Mind Matters: California’s Mental Health Movement*, *SanaMente* defines a commitment to the Latino community and captures the idea of a growing movement for mental health awareness, equity for mental health care, and inclusion for people living with mental illness in an accepting climate free of stigma.

“[Reconozca Las Señales](#)” teaches users how to identify the signs of suicide, and take action to stop it. The “Reconozca Las Señales” suicide prevention campaign has been shown to increase public awareness of suicide risk and build confidence in taking action that saves lives.

A series of fotonovelas, small, illustrated booklets on education, health and faith, increase awareness of mental health and wellness options in

Latino families and communities. Visit [www.SanaMente.org/recursos](http://www.SanaMente.org/recursos) to download the booklets.

“[Ponte En Mis Zapatos](#),” is a positive way to engage young people ages 9-13 in a conversation about accepting other people’s differences and about mental health, with an engaging interactive website.

The new study was sponsored by CalMHSA and conducted independently by the RAND Corporation. The report, “Racial and Ethnic Differences in Mental Illness Stigma and Discrimination Among Californians Experiencing Mental Health Challenges,” can be found at: [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1441.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1441.html)

# # #

*The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. Prevention and Early Intervention programs implemented by CalMHSA 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.*