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[California Mental Health Services Authority](#)

For Immediate Release

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Mental Health Month Provides Opportunity to Break Down Mental Health Stigma for API Community

*** see below for API 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. California has been on the forefront of addressing stigma and mental health among diverse communities through *Each Mind Matters: California’s Mental Health Movement*. A new report from researchers at the RAND Corporation finds even more encouraging information – the vast majority of Californians who are experiencing psychological distress regardless of race-ethnicity felt it was possible to recover from mental health challenges. However, these findings also demonstrated that mental health disparities still remain.

Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Californians are less likely to seek services for help with a mental health concern, and this may be due to negative attitudes and beliefs regarding mental illness, according to RAND researchers. For example, Asian Americans were more likely than their

white counterparts to feel inferior to those who have not had a mental health problem.

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 study offers insight and information that policymakers and advocates can use to craft services that improve API access and utilization of mental health services.

“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 API communities,” said Vinya Sysamouth, the Executive Director at the Center for Lao Studies in San Francisco. “When people with mental health challenges feel accepted rather than isolated, we can create a state of better mental health in California, and reduce the toll untreated mental health challenges have on California’s communities.”

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

Fact Sheets on Mental Health Terms and Mental Health Myths and Facts have been translated for use in [Lao](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Cambodian](#), [Hmong](#), [Khmer](#) and [Lu Mien](#).

The Know the Signs suicide prevention campaign, which teaches Californians to identify the signs of suicide, and take action to stop it, has [culturally adapted suicide prevention outreach materials](#) such as posters, brochures, and print, TV and radio ads, for the Korean, Vietnamese, Hmong, Lao, Chinese, Cambodian and Filipino communities. The ads break down the misconception that seeking help is a sign of weakness. The Know the Signs suicide prevention campaign has been

shown to increase public awareness of suicide risk and build confidence in taking action that saves lives.

The [Each Mind Matters Great Minds Gallery](#) hosts many videos with stories of hope and resilience that can be used in outreach to Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

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

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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.