



Mary Hayashi Appointed to Commission Overseeing Mental Health Services Act

Iris Alliance Fund President Mary Hayashi has been appointed to California's Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission. This 16-member commission of elected state officials and governor appointees was created by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to monitor the Act's implementation.

"I am incredibly honored and excited to be a part of this crucial and groundbreaking work," Mary Hayashi said. "Mental illness touches the lives of thousands of children and adults in California. For example, 44 percent of adults in California know someone who committed or attempted suicide as a teenager. The voters' overwhelming approval of Proposition 63 was our mandate to provide California families with the mental health services they need."

This appointment adds another chapter to Ms. Hayashi's longtime dedication to improving access to mental health care, preventing youth suicide and eliminating the stigma of mental illness. She served as the Coordinator of Alameda County's campaign to win passage of Proposition 63. Also, since its founding in 2001, Ms. Hayashi has established the Iris Alliance Fund as a leading voice in youth suicide prevention. Her remarkable journey from her childhood in Korea to prominence as a national leader and strategist in the campaign for inclusive and just health care is documented in her award-winning book, *Far From Home: Shattering the Myth of the Model Minority*.

In November of 2004, California voters passed Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act. The MHSA imposes an additional 1 percent tax on personal income in excess of \$1 million to provide funding to expand and improve mental health services for children and adults statewide. A portion of the funding is dedicated to prevention and early intervention programs to detect and treat mental illness before it becomes debilitating. (For more information about the Mental Health Services Act, go to www.dmh.cahwnet.gov/MHSA/default.asp.)

The role of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission is to develop strategies to overcome stigma and accomplish the objectives of the Act. The Commission will advise the governor or the Legislature regarding actions the state may take to improve care and services for people with mental illness. The Commission is required to annually review and approve each county's mental health program.

"The Act's emphasis on prevention, early intervention and stigma elimination is truly groundbreaking," Ms. Hayashi said. "The stigma of mental illness is a tremendous barrier for people who are suffering to seek the help they need. By breaking the silence and treating mental illness as an important public health issue, we can help people overcome mental illness and go on to lead healthy, happy, productive lives."

The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission

Wes Chesbro — California State Senator

Carmen Diaz — Family advocate coordinator, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Fred Doyle — President & CEO, EMQ

Saul Feldman, D.P.A. — Chairman & CEO, United Behavioral Health

Linford Gayle — Mental health program specialist, San Mateo County Mental Health Services

Mary Hayashi — President, Iris Alliance Fund

Patrick Henning — Legislative advocate, California Council of Laborers

Karen Henry — Labor and employment attorney (retired)

Gary Jaeger, M.D. — Chief of addiction medicine, Kaiser Foundation Hospital, South Bay

William Kolender — San Diego County Sheriff

Kelvin Lee, Ed.D. — Superintendent, Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District

Bill Lockyer — California Attorney General

Andrew Poat — Director, government relations department, City of San Diego

Darlene Prettyman — Director of government relations, Anne Sippi Clinic

Mark Ridley-Thomas — California State Assembly Member

Darrell Steinberg — Proposition 63 co-author