

Adobe Stock images

PROPOSITION 1

by Katherine Lanzalotto '25

Proposition 1 is a two-part initiative that seeks to amend California's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to increase the allocation of funds for the state through a \$6.4 billion general obligation bond. Two-thirds of the money would pay for more treatment centers for substance abuse treatment and the remainder would fund housing for individuals with mental health or substance abuse problems.

Proposition 1 would alter the California MHSA by changing how counties fund services while instituting a general obligation bond to build housing facilities for substance abuse and mental health treatment. Prop 1 would rename California's MHSA to the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) and expand its scope to substance abuse disorders in general. It would shift California's existing funding allocation for county mental health programming by decreasing the percentage of MHSA taxes counties receive by 5% while doubling the state government's share of MHSA money. The state would be required to spend a dedicated portion of these funds on programs to decrease the pervasiveness of drug addiction and mental illness and augment the number of mental healthcare workers. Proposition 1 would also alter the MHSA by changing how counties could still provide mental health and substance use services. Under Prop 1, counties could still provide mental health services such as treatment, outreach, and crisis response but would have less MHSA money available

to fund such programs. Instead, counties would be required to spend at least 30% of their funding on housing and to focus money on support services for people with mental illness or substance abuse problems.

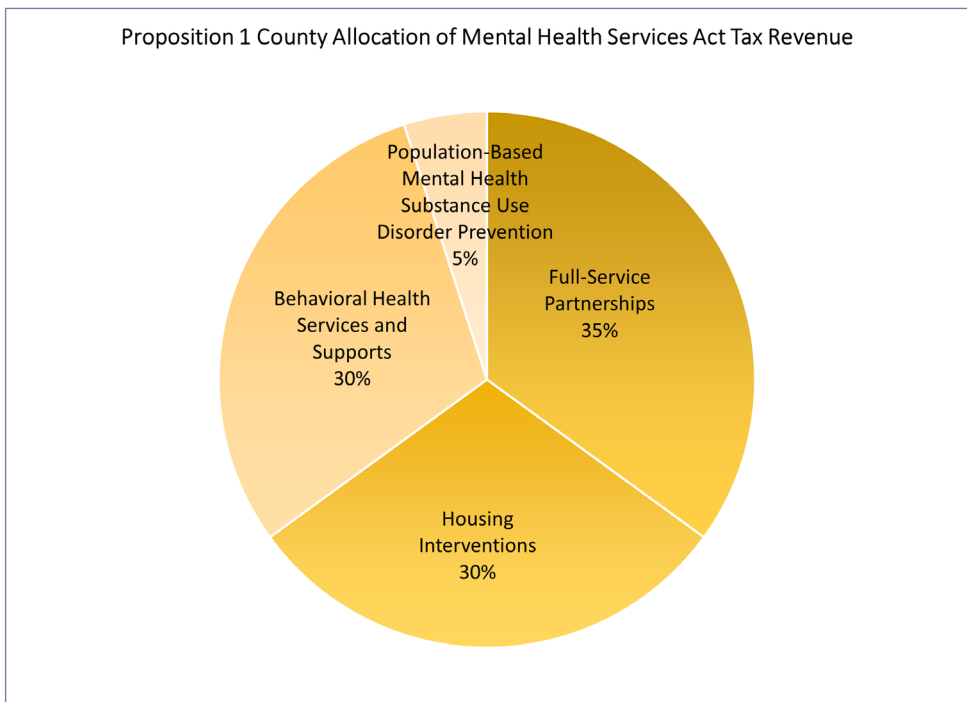
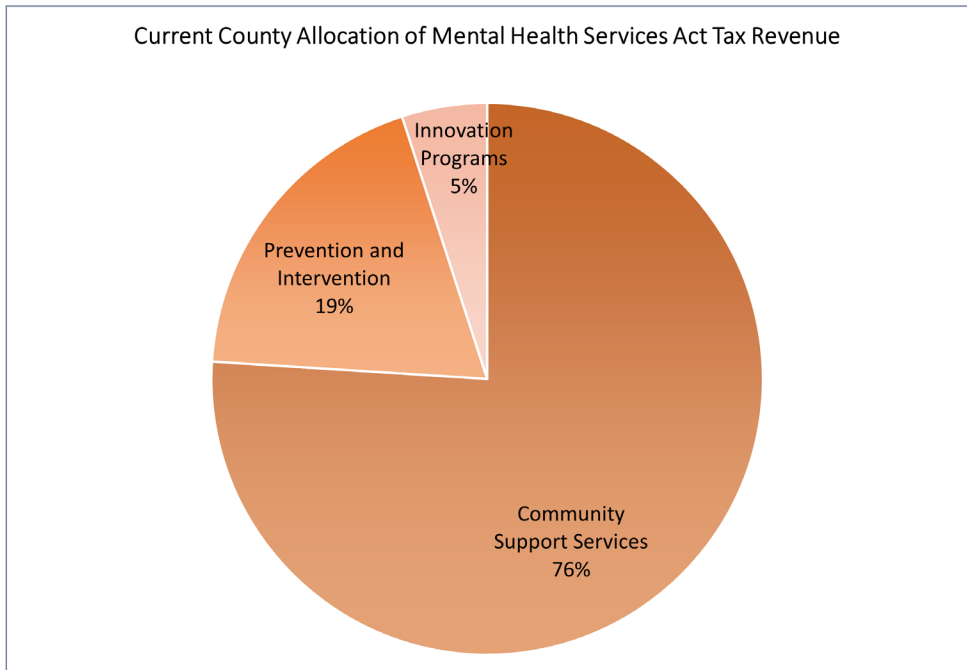
Prop 1 also authorizes a bond that would fund two forms of construction: treatment centers and housing projects. It would allow the state to sell \$6.4 billion in bonds, the primary method through which California borrows money. Up to \$4.4 billion of the bond would go to state programs that construct buildings for substance use or mental health treatment, and at least \$1.5 billion would be designated to tribes and municipalities. Proposition 1 would designate the funds to state programs that repurpose existing buildings or construct new buildings to house people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness and those experiencing mental health or substance abuse issues. Notably, Prop 1 would set aside half of the housing bond funding for veterans.

Supporters of Proposition 1 include Governor Gavin Newsom, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, the California Hospital Association, Kaiser Permanente, and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

Opponents of Proposition 1 include Cal Voices, League of Women Voters of California, Disability Rights California, and Mental Health America in California.

A YES vote on Proposition 1 would make counties change some of their mental health and substance use treatment services to shift focus onto housing and support services. It would expand how much funding the state receives from the MHSA and stipulate how counties can spend their MHSA money. Also, the state could borrow \$6.4 billion to build housing and treatment centers for people with mental health and substance use challenges.

A NO vote on Proposition 1 means that counties would not change their current treatment services and the state could not borrow \$6.4 billion to build treatment and housing facilities. ♦



Source: "Proposed Restructuring of the MHSA Funding Categories and Impacts on County Spending," Legislative Analyst's Office. <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4782>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "Borrow \$6.4 billion, change mental health law." *Cal Matters*. Accessed February 23, 2024. <https://calmatters.org/california-voter-guide-2024/prop-1-mental-health/>.
- "California's most vulnerable need treatment, not tents." Treatment not Tents. https://treatmentnottents.com/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjAz8GuBhCxARIsAOpzk8z-Bfwm8KgolEnnMNDsH-7dg4y5MXcCOXe_FKO6FcGXrcf02qbEu10aAtEeEALw_wcB.
- "Facts." Californians Against Prop 1. Accessed February 18, 2024. <https://www.prop1no.com/>.
- Official Voter Information Guide for Primary Election, March 5, 2024. Accessed February 23, 2024. <https://vig.cdn.sos.ca.gov/2024/primary/pdf/topl.pdf>.
- "Proposed Restructuring of the MHSA Funding Categories and Impacts on County Spending." Legislative Analyst's Office. Accessed February 26, 2024. <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4782>
- "Proposition 1: Analysis of Measure." Legislative Analyst's Office. Accessed February 18, 2024. <https://lao.ca.gov/BallotAnalysis/Proposition?number=1&year=2024>.