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April 16, 2014

Senator Corbett, Chair, Budget Sub #3
Assembly Member Weber, Chair, Budget Sub #1
California State Legislature
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Mental Health Parity Enforcement Budget Act - SUPPORT

Dear Honorable Chairs,

On behalf of the Cities Association of Santa Clara County, I urge you to support the ***Mental Health Parity Enforcement Budget Act***. This action will ensure millions of Californians suffering from mental health and substance abuse disorders get the help they need and deserve at a minimal cost to the state general fund.

Despite the passage of the parity laws, access to mental health and substance abuse treatment remains elusive for too many Californians. Only 60 percent of people suffering mental illness actually get treatment, according to federal health officials. Stronger enforcement laws are needed to safeguard consumers from health insurers who routinely ignore the law.

The Cities Association of Santa Clara County is a collaborative organization that represents the mutual interests of the diverse 15 cities of Santa Clara County and advocates for positive action to enhance the quality of life for the people of our county. As a unified voice, the Cities Association recognizes that the Mental Health Parity Enforcement Budget Act would dramatically improve consumer and provider transparency, adopt national standards and force health insurers to submit documented evidence --surveys of consumers and providers and other analysis --to prove they are complying with the law. Most importantly, it provides funding derived primarily from fees on insurance plans to ensure regulators have the tools they need to enforce tougher standards and rules.

Consumers paying for insurance should have confidence that they are receiving all of their entitled services. Transparency for parity in insurance and health service plan

operations is a federal requirement designed to ensure equity and fairness in the provision of those services.

In California, an estimated 500,000 people with mental health needs are now eligible for health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Now more than ever, we must ensure all Californians suffering from a mental health or substance abuse disorder get the treatment they deserve.

Thank you for supporting the Mental Health Parity Enforcement Budget Act and the millions of Californians who are suffering from mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Tate". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" and "T".

Steve Tate
President, Cities Association of Santa Clara County
Mayor, City of Morgan Hill

Cc: Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor, State of California
Shelley Rouillard, Director, California Department of Managed Health Care