

MAYOR STEINBERG: THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO CARE THAN CARE COURTS

Experts say: CARE courts are *NOT* the better way to meet the needs of homeless individuals with psychosis. ISPS-US calls upon the Mayor of Sacramento to join a panel at our conference showcasing the alternatives.

The **ISPS-US Conference, “Opportunity Through Experience: Psychosis, Extreme States, and Possibilities for Transformation,”** is coming to Sacramento, from November 4-6 at the Embassy Suites, Riverfront Promenade. The three-day event features clinicians, researchers, advocates, and people with lived experience, who promote humane psychological and social approaches to psychosis. ISPS-US invites Mayor Darrell Steinberg the opportunity to join a panel on November 5th, discussing psychosis and homelessness to learn more.

The panel was inspired by SB 1338 the CARE Courts legislation California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law on September 14. Billed as a “paradigm shift,” it has triggered a major outcry from clinicians, researchers and people with lived experience, as well as from the professional and social justice organizations that represent them.

This legislation, enacting California’s CARE Court system, empowers providers, family members and first responders to petition for court orders that will enforce treatment on “people with schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders.”¹ The bill, written with bipartisan support, and in consultation with “many passionate activists,” including NAMI, passed almost unanimously in the state legislature.

However, in the past several decades, enormous progress has been made towards understanding and treating psychosis. Humane treatment is not rocket science; and there is much that we already know:

- That respecting the agency of people from diverse backgrounds and marginalized groups is paramount to unravelling the systemic oppression that makes them sick.
- That the “mentally ill” are too often disregarded in movements supporting diversity.
- That coercive interventions, including forced treatments, overmedication and unnecessary hospitalization, are correlated with less likelihood of recovery.²
- That coercive practices will impact people of color the most.
- That psychological and social approaches are more effective in restoring personhood and health.
- That psychological and social approaches are less expensive over time to provide than coercive “quick-fix,” practices that treat people as objects first, rather than as subjects.³

Around the US and world, but largely off the “mental health grid,” programs have emerged that are offering superior treatment outcomes in ways that do not coerce vulnerable or marginalized populations. By not consulting the practitioners and researchers at the cutting edge of psychosis treatment today, nor adequately hearing the voices of patients and family members who have lived the recovery process first-hand, California creates the risk that the billions of dollars will be spent ineffectively at best, and that those whom the state most wants to help will be the most negatively impacted.

We invite Mayor Darrel Steinberg, who has voiced support for CARE courts⁴, the opportunity to take part and learn more about how houseless Sacramento citizens can be cared for without CARE.

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¹ <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2022/08/31/governor-newsom-statement-on-the-legislatures-passage-of-care-court/>

² <https://www.madinamerica.com/2013/03/do-antipsychotics-worsen-long-term-schizophrenia-outcomes-martin-harrow-explores-the-question/?fbclid=IwAR2MaSeIlcPE1nSQtcAUwmCnr1unHzk7BO8Qsd1nSJRFduc6EU8SZW150>

³ <https://www.amazon.com/Psychotherapy-Worth-Comprehensive-Review-Cost-effectiveness/dp/0873182154>

⁴ <https://www.californiacitynews.org/2022/03/newsoms-%E2%80%9Ccare-courts%E2%80%9D-would-compel-treatment-mentally-ill.html>