

Welcome to the Senate Mental Health Caucus website. The mission of this bipartisan caucus is to examine the growing challenges that mental illness presents to our society. The caucus also seeks to increase legislators' knowledge and understanding about this very complex field of health.

It would be a mistake to presume that mental illness will not affect our life or someone we know. Mental disorders, including substance abuse disorders, strike an astonishing 57.4 percent of all Americans at some time during their lives.

Untreated mental illness drives our [public safety and justice system costs](#), diverting taxpayer dollars that could be spent on schools, universities, or our seniors and children. From 2009 to 2012, California trimmed its mental health programs budget by \$765 million but the number of prison inmates with mental illness increased to 25 percent from 19 percent during 2007 to 2012.

To ignore the real need to make mental health treatment affordable and accessible imperils all of us. Research has revealed women are at a significantly greater risk for any anxiety disorder especially for depression, where their rate is nearly double that of men's risk for depression. Men are at greater risk for impulse-control disorders and for substance disorders and are more than twice the risk for alcoholism and three times the risk for drug abuse.

The Mental Health Caucus is also dedicated to educating the public about legislation that focuses on making the treatment and the delivery of mental health services more efficient and available. This page will be updated with information about upcoming meetings, agendas, and significant legislation such as [SB 22](#).

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Beall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Beall

Senate District 15

Senate Mental Health Caucus, chair