

# what's @stake

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## ISSUE:

Governor Brown's 2012-2013 budget proposal has Trailer Bill Language seeking to split the functions and responsibilities of the Office of Multicultural Services (OMS) between Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and Department of Public Health (DPH).

OMS was established in 1998 to coordinate efforts in reducing disparities in access and quality of care faced by racial, ethnic, un-served and underserved communities. OMS works with community stakeholders to foster change in policy, access, language, clinical practice, research, and intervention practices in mental health programs.

## POSITION:

Keep the Office of Multicultural Services (OMS) whole with all of its functions and responsibilities intact in DPH, particularly with the new Office of Health Equity (OHE) tasked to take a more comprehensive and integrative approach to disparity elimination and health promotion.

## RATIONALE:

Splitting the functions and responsibilities of OMS between DHCS and DPH will likely irreparably compromise the short-term capacity and long-term efficacy of OMS to champion issues of cultural competence in mental health.

Keeping OMS whole with DPH, especially with the new Office of Health Equity is the arrangement that best:

- **ensures adequate staffing** levels required by OMS to carry out its duties in reducing mental health disparities
- **leverages the achievements of OMS** in creating valuable new partnerships, generating a significant body of data and lessons learned regarding the elimination of racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic health disparities, and
- **strengthens OMS** as a technical assistance provider in health disparity reduction statewide.