When I launched the Steinberg Institute in 2015, my message was clear: mental health is the under-attended issue of our time.

Since then, our work has generated billions of dollars for vital programs that directly impact the lives of California’s most vulnerable. At the same time, we’ve shifted the narrative around mental health and substance use policies. We achieve these victories by partnering with like-minded organizations and individuals and inspiring leadership on mental health and substance use policy.

A few notable highlights...

• More than 13,000 supportive housing units have been built for people who are experiencing homelessness and living with a serious mental illness, with thousands more on the way, thanks to the No Place Like Home Program, approved by California voters in 2018.
• Californians facing a mental health crisis will have someone to call, someone to come and somewhere to go, thanks to our leadership in implementing the new 988 crisis line.
• Insurance companies are now required to provide the same level of coverage for mental health treatment as physical health, thanks to Senate Bill 855, landmark legislation that continues to place California at the forefront of battling mental health discrimination.

But there’s much more work to do. To meet the urgent challenges facing our state, this year, our dedicated staff and board developed a strategic plan focused on our commitment to tackling key challenges and ensuring everyone receives the care they deserve whenever, wherever and for as long as they need it.

I’m honored to share our successes and vision for the future with you and grateful for your ongoing support.

Darrell Steinberg
Founder
Our Mission
Transforming California's mental health and substance use care systems through education, advocacy, accountability, and inspired leadership.

Our Vision
California sets the standards for the nation in prevention, treatment and recovery; where all people receive quality care and support when, where, and for as long as they need it.

MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS
Each May, during Mental Health Awareness Month, we honor Californians working to change the way we view and talk about mental health and mental illness – to lift the veil of stigma, add compassion, and ensure that the most vulnerable among us can get the support they need.
Over the last decade...

8X

increase in legislation focused on California's mental health and substance use systems

...and funding for public mental health and substance use disorder services in California has more than doubled.

2011–2012

9 bills focused on California's mental health and substance use systems

$7.5 billion for public mental health and substance use disorder services in California

2021–2022

84 bills focused on California's mental health and substance use systems

$16.5 billion for public mental health and substance use disorder services in California
SECURING MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING
The Steinberg Institute’s efforts have led to $5 BILLION for initiatives impacting all Californians

$2 BILLION
Proposition 2: Establishing the No Place Like Home Program, financing permanent housing for people with mental illness who are homeless or at risk for chronic homelessness

$200M
Funding for innovative training, fellowship and retention programs to rebuild California’s behavioral health workforce

$186M
Dedicated annual funding for the 988 crisis continuum in California, connecting callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline through an easy to remember three digit number

$340M
Increasing access to mental health resources for California’s students, including drop-in centers, school/county partnerships, workforce development and trauma screening programs

$134M
Early intervention services for California county mental health departments and increasing access to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by adding additional languages

$130M
Annual funding to build apartments for people living with severe mental illness and experiencing homelessness, including wrap-around services

$2 BILLION
Addressing California’s homelessness crisis through evidence-based solutions and mental health treatment
Key sponsor of first-of-its-kind law establishing a framework and ongoing funding for the 988 crisis continuum through a small telephone line fee.

Established California as the first state in the nation to require true parity, requiring commercial health insurers to cover needed mental health and addiction services, as they cover treatment for physical health.

Peer support specialists certification process established for California, opening the door to people with lived experience to provide support for people seeking care.

Obtained up to $130 million annually to be dedicated towards building apartments for people living with severe mental illness and experiencing homelessness.

Requiring collection of critical data on board and care homes that provide a vital housing option for people with severe mental illness.

Addressing the workforce shortage by allowing licensed nurse practitioners to work at the top of their license without direct physician oversight.
Led the way to ensure the state develops and promotes the first-ever voluntary standards for workplace mental health. It’s time people who live with a mental illness are accommodated at work.

Instead of discharging homeless patients onto the street, hospitals must develop discharge plans, ensuring they end up in a safe place.

Secured the Governor’s, legislature’s, and voters’ support to leverage up to $2 billion in bonds, by redirecting existing state funds to build up to 20,000 permanent supportive housing units for people who are homeless and live with a serious mental illness.

Law enforcement de-escalation training for psychiatric calls

Primary care physicians receive the basic training they need to recognize the symptoms of common brain health conditions and provide appropriate treatment or referrals.

Inspired first-of-its-kind public-private partnership to fund evidenced-based treatment for early detection of symptoms of serious mental illness in young people.

Darrell Steinberg launches the Steinberg Institute, an independent institute dedicated to sound mental health policies in California.
We believe that all Californians have a right to quality care.

Residents have ready access to, and coverage for, high-quality, integrated care that is grounded in best practices

- A robust workforce is available to meet the urgent and ongoing needs for care
- Residents are entitled to a universal and comprehensive array of services for all ages
- Care providers utilize models of care that demonstrate improved outcomes and reflect the diversity of California
- Career pathways for peers and non-traditional workforce are created and supported
- System involvement (Education, Health Systems, Homelessness, Criminal Justice, Child Welfare) is reduced through cross-sector partnerships

We believe that quality care for Californians requires transparency and accountability.

Vital information about California’s spending and outcomes is collected, analyzed, made publicly available, and met with a focus on quality improvement and accountability

- Fiscal transparency is ensured through dashboards showing behavioral health spending
- Outcome transparency is ensured through dashboards showing behavioral health service data
- Fiscal and outcome data are utilized to improve efficiency and quality of care
- Social determinants of health outcomes are improved through cross-system partnerships dedicated to sharing data, costs and accountability
- Legislation is implemented in a timely fashion, maintaining integrity to the intent of the law

We believe that quality care for Californians requires health equity.

Equitable access to care and recovery is available for all Californians living with mental health and/or substance use disorders

- Investments are made in prevention and early intervention
- System involvement (health systems, homelessness, criminal justice, child welfare) is reduced for marginalized groups
- Deaths due to avoidable causes, such as suicide and overdoses, are prevented
- Quality of life recovery outcomes are quantified, elevated, shared and improved

We believe that our system can be transformed through bold, shared leadership.

Breaking down the barriers created by stigma and discrimination, we educate and inspire leadership on all issues related to mental health and substance use disorders

- State leadership and Legislators are educated regarding mental health and substance use disorder policy and practice
- Innovative best practices are highlighted and spread
- National stakeholders are engaged in advancing the Steinberg Institute’s work
OUR TEAM

Chief Executive Officer
Karen Larsen, LMFT

Karen brings a rich history of public service and proven leadership to the role of the Steinberg Institute’s first Chief Executive Officer. As a natural result of her own life’s experience, her academic training, and the 30 years of recovery she has achieved, she possesses an unwavering passion and extraordinary ability to improve the lives of California’s most vulnerable communities.

Prior to joining the Steinberg Institute, Karen served as the Director of Yolo County’s Health and Human Services Agency, an integrated agency providing social services, public health, mental health, and substance use services to the over 212,000 residents of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland. Her commitment to integrating care has not only ensured people receive the care they need but has exponentially improved the outcomes for those who have both behavioral health challenges and other comorbid physical health conditions.

In addition to her work at the local level, Karen has been an active member of many statewide groups engaging in cross-system collaboration to address all determinants of health.

Chief Operating Officer
Maggie Merritt

Maggie has worked in the public policy arena since 1989. She brings a rich blend of nonprofit, public policy, and political campaign experience to her role as Chief Operating Officer for the Steinberg Institute. Maggie worked alongside Darrell Steinberg to launch the Institute and served as the organization’s inaugural executive director from 2015-2022. Before this, she worked as a leader and advocate for nonprofit organizations focused on women’s and children’s health, violence prevention, and social justice issues.

In 2004, Maggie worked alongside then-Amblymember Darrell Steinberg on the successful Yes on Proposition 63 campaign that enacted the Mental Health Services Act, a 1 percent tax on personal income over $1 million to bolster funding for public mental health services across California.

Social Media and Content Manager, Amanda Cruz
Senior Advocate, Tara Gamboa-Eastman
Senior Advocate, Corey Hashida
Director of Administration, Carmen Marcelo
Director of Communications, Jason Shoults
Sacramento Mayor and former State Senate President Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg is a powerful and effective advocate for mental health care policy in California. He has a long history of championing policy issues affecting mental health and has gained the respect and trust of providers, decision-makers, business leaders, and advocacy organizations across the state and nation.

As a member of the state Assembly, he authored the **2004 Mental Health Services Act**, landmark legislation that now generates $4 billion annually for services for individuals with the most severe mental illnesses, as well as innovative programs and research focused on early detection, intervention, and prevention of psychosis and serious mood disorders.

His commitment to improving mental health care has resulted in services that provide integrated care to the homeless. In 2013, as a state senator, Darrell authored SB 82, propelling a major statewide expansion of crisis residential and stabilization beds and mobile crisis capacity. In 2015, continuing his press for change, he established a first-of-its-kind statewide organization, the **Steinberg Institute**, dedicated to raising the profile of quality mental health care as a critical public policy and civil rights issue.

In February 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom appointed Darrell to co-lead a new statewide commission on Homelessness and Supportive Housing. The commission provided guidance to the Governor on measures to reduce homelessness in California.

In addition to serving as Sacramento’s Mayor, Darrell serves on the Steinberg Institute Board of Directors.
SUPPORT

Thanks to the generous support of these valued partners, the Steinberg Institute is able to advance solutions to some of society’s most pressing issues of our time and to expand services, support innovation, and shift the treatment paradigm for mental health care and substance use disorder to one in which the emphasis is on early detection, prevention and intervention.

Our work is also fueled by many individual donors and strategic partnerships with state, national and global mental health organizations. We are grateful for their ongoing support.

steinberginstitute.org

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The Steinberg Institute is a Section 501(c)(3) charitable organization. All donations are deemed tax-deductible absent any limitations on deductibility applicable to a particular taxpayer.