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**Class Action Suit Filed Against County of Sacramento, Board Of Supervisors Over  
Termination of Outpatient Mental Health Services**

SACRAMENTO, May 6, 2010 – Disability Rights California, the Western Center on Law and Poverty and Cooley LLP jointly announced today the filing of a class action lawsuit seeking to enjoin Sacramento County’s plan to terminate outpatient mental health services to thousands of indigent Medi-Cal patients on June 30, 2010. The suit, filed in United States District Court for the Eastern District of California, alleges that the County’s planned termination of these services violates numerous federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the Medicaid Act and the federal and state constitutions.

The named plaintiffs are five indigent residents of Sacramento County who currently receive outpatient mental health services provided by the County, which receives federal and state funding for doing so. Named as defendants are the County, its Board of Supervisors, and County officials responsible for the administration of outpatient mental health services.

According to the complaint filed today, Sacramento County currently provides outpatient mental health services to approximately 5,000 adults with severe and chronic mental illness in six community-based treatment programs, through which each client is treated under an individually tailored program combining psychotherapy, counseling, medication and support services. These programs, including four Regional Support Teams, have had remarkable success in stabilizing clients with a long history of repeated hospitalizations, so that they can return to productive lives and rejoin family members in the community. The County has stated that these programs will be terminated on June 30 due to budget cuts. The County claims that replacement services will be available on July 1, but so far has released almost no information about what services will be provided, by whom, where they will be located, how patients’ records will be transferred, or how patients can be assured of continuity of treatment. Unless the County’s service terminations are enjoined, the affected patients are likely to go into crisis and will end up in hospital emergency rooms or locked mental health facilities, at far greater cost to the County.

“These service cuts are not only unlawful, they also threaten catastrophic harm to the most vulnerable members of our society,” said Stuart Seaborn, Managing Attorney of Disability Rights California’s Sacramento Regional Office. Robert Newman, Senior Counsel for the Western Center of Law and Poverty, added, “It will be impossible for the County to assume responsibility for treating 5,000 individuals in less than two months. The County has to find and furnish new offices, select qualified professionals, train the staff, notify the clients of the change, obtain their records, meet with the clients and their current providers, and schedule new appointments.”

William Freeman, a partner with Cooley LLP, observed that “there is simply no way to justify the County’s proposed plans, which will deprive thousands of people of services to which they are legally entitled, and on which they and their families depend for survival. The proposed changes are not only illegal but will ultimately cost the County and its taxpayers more over the long term than if the existing support programs were kept in place.”

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Disability Rights California was founded in 1978 as California’s protection and advocacy system to provide direct assistance to people with disabilities in implementing their rights. The Western Center on Law and Poverty, founded in 1967, works statewide for system-wide change to secure housing, health care and a strong safety net for low-income Californians. Cooley LLP, a nationwide, full-service law firm that received the 2009 State Bar of California’s President’s Pro Bono Service Award, is assisting in this case on a *pro bono* basis.