



# Council on Mentally Ill Offenders (COMIO)

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Scott Kernan, Chair**  
Secretary, California  
Department of Corrections and  
Rehabilitation

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Behavioral Health Director,  
Alameda County

**Pamela Ahlin**  
Director, California Department  
of State Hospitals

**Jessica Cruz**  
Executive Director, National  
Alliance on Mental Illness  
(NAMI) California

**Alfred Joshua**  
Chief Medical Officer, San Diego  
County Sheriff's Department

**Jennifer Kent**  
Director, California Department  
of Health Care Services

**Dave Lehman**  
Retired Chief Probation Officer,  
Humboldt County

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Santa Clara County Superior  
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Clinical Professor/Research  
Scholar, USC Keck School of  
Medicine

**Lester P. Pincu**  
Professor Emeritus of  
Criminology, CSU-Fresno

**Mack Jenkins**  
Chief Probation Officer, San  
Diego County Probation  
Department

**Charles L. Walters**  
Retired Assistant Sheriff, Orange  
County

## Overview

Since 2001 California, through the Council on Mentally Ill Offenders (COMIO), has recognized that individuals living with mental illness are at risk of becoming criminally involved without access to support and needed services. COMIO's primary goal is to investigate and promote cost-effective approaches to meeting the mental health needs of at-risk adults and juveniles who are likely to become offenders or who have had a history of offending.

In pursuit of that goal, COMIO is to:

- Identify strategies for preventing adults and juveniles with mental health needs from becoming offenders;
- Identify strategies for improving the cost-effectiveness of services for adults and juveniles with mental health needs who have a history of offending; and
- Identify incentives to encourage state and local criminal justice, juvenile justice, and mental health programs to adopt cost-effective approaches for adults and juveniles who are likely to offend or who have a criminal history.

## Composition

COMIO is a 12 member council chaired by the Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and includes key leadership such as the Director of the California Department of State Hospitals, and the Director of the California Department of Health Care Services. In addition, there are several appointed expert representatives from local criminal justice and mental health systems.

## Priorities in 2016

The Council will focus on identifying and promoting integrated, cost-effective strategies to:

- Divert persons with mental health needs from the criminal justice system;
- Improve first responder training for encounters with persons with mental illness; and
- Prevent youth with mental health needs from becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

COMIO would like to engage external stakeholders to identify recommended strategies in the above areas and welcomes your collaboration. To learn more or to get involved, please contact Stephanie Welch, Executive Officer, at (916) 324-7021 or visit [www.cdcr.ca.gov.ca.gov/COMIO](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov.ca.gov/COMIO).