



California Voter Survey: Behavioral Health Issues June 20, 2018

Methodology

David Binder Research conducted a survey of 800 likely November 2018 voters from June 6th–11th 2018. Interviews were conducted by telephone, with 53% on landlines and 47% on cell phones. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 3.5%.

Topline Findings

Nine in ten voters say it is important for California to address mental health and drug and alcohol use disorders, including 70% who say this is very important.

When asked how important it is, compared to other issues, for the state to address mental health and drug and alcohol use disorders, 92% of voters say this is either very important (70%) or somewhat important (22%). Only 15% of voters say California is making progress in dealing with these issues, while 46% say things are staying the same and 31% say the state is losing ground.

Importance of Addressing Behavioral Health	Total Important
Compared to other issues facing voters, how important is it for California to address mental health and drug and alcohol use disorders?	92

An overwhelming majority say it is important for candidates to prioritize improving behavioral health, with half of voters saying this is very important.

In considering which candidates to vote for in this November's election, 85% of voters say it is either very important (51%) or somewhat important (34%) that the candidate prioritizes improving mental health and drug and alcohol addiction. A majority (57%) say access to mental health and drug and alcohol use services needs much improvement in California.

Candidate Priorities	Total Important
In considering which candidates to vote for in this November's election, how important is it to you personally that a candidate prioritizes improving mental health and drug and alcohol addiction?	85

There is widespread agreement with prioritizing behavioral health and thinking about behavioral health in new ways.

Strong majorities agree with several statements about prioritizing behavioral health and rethinking our approach to it. Nine in ten voters agree with the statement that we need to increase access and remove barriers to improve the ways we help people with mental illness and drug and alcohol use disorders.

Statements About Behavioral Health		Total Agree
Category	Statement	
We Need to Do More	We need to increase access and remove barriers to improve the ways we help people with mental illness and drug and alcohol use disorders.	89
	Local and statewide leaders should be doing more to reduce the impact of mental health and addiction issues in our communities.	89
	Government should do more to address the shortage of qualified professionals to support and treat people with mental health conditions and addiction.	85
	California should establish a cabinet-level position dedicated to overseeing the state’s mental illness and drug and alcohol use disorder system.	72
We Need to Think Differently	We need to think differently about how California addresses mental health and addiction needs throughout the state.	89
	We should humanize rather than criminalize those suffering from a mental health condition or addiction.	84
	Mental health and physical health needs should be treated equally.	83
Wide Impact of Behavioral Health	Increased access to treatment for mental illness and addiction can help to solve California’s growing problem with homelessness.	84
	Mental health and addiction issues affect nearly every family.	83
	School-based mental health programs have a positive impact on kids	77

There is serious concern among California voters about mental health and substance abuse disorder issues.

When asked to think about people they know and work with in their communities, around 3 in 4 voters say several behavioral health issues are either very or somewhat serious. These include mental illness (79%), depression (78%), drug abuse (76%), anxiety (76%), and alcohol abuse (74%).

Seriousness of behavioral health issues	Total Serious
Mental illness	79
Depression	78
Drug abuse	76
Anxiety	76
Alcohol abuse	74

Around 3 in 4 voters say they know either quite a bit (42%) or some (34%) about mental health and drug and alcohol use disorders.