



May 7, 2001

Dear County Supervisors:

BACUP is an agency contracted by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health to provide a wide range of services geared toward individuals with severe mental disabilities as well as who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. We work closely with the Mental Health Association and with Mental Health Advocacy Services.

As service providers for people with mental disabilities and the homeless, we would like to offer our support for a Commission for Men in Los Angeles County. The success of the Commission for Women in advocating for elderly women, abused women, homeless women, women's health and other issues affecting women is an encouraging sign that a Commission for Men could also successfully address these and other issues affecting men and boys.

Men account for 62 percent of our clients, and yet studies show men are at least 25 percent less likely than women to seek medical treatment for their illnesses. It is likely, therefore, that the non-treatment of mental illnesses is largely to blame for the disproportionate number of males who are homeless, incarcerated, substance-dependent and in a state of despair.

The Georgia Commission on Men's Health recently declared that men are in a "silent health crisis." Likewise, the New Hampshire Committee on the Status of Men found that men are in a "serious state of decay." Federal Committees involved in the Men's Health Act have arrived at similar conclusions. And there is every reason to believe these findings apply to men in Los Angeles as much as anywhere else.

The benefits that a Commission for Men could offer communities in Los Angeles are as numerous as they are critical. For example, the Commission could conduct research and advise County officials on the many social ills that affect males and could serve as a central referral bank of resources, programs and support groups for fathers, veterans, parolees, homeless men, suicide prevention, teen boys, prisoners, former gang members, as well as victims of prison rape, AIDS, false accusations, testicular and prostate cancer, substance addiction, mental illness and more.

We feel a Commission for Men could be a tremendous benefit to the County of Los Angeles and we ask the County Board of Supervisors to consider creating one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read 'Andrew Posner', is written over a horizontal line.

Andrew Posner
Executive Director