

El Dorado County's former mental health chief dies

By Robert D. Dávila, Sacramento Bee

Tom Sullivan, a dedicated public servant who advocated for treatment services as mental health director for El Dorado and Sacramento counties, died Feb. 7 after a recent stroke, his family said. He was 71.

Mr. Sullivan was a widely recognized expert on mental health policy in California. He began his career at Napa State Hospital in the 1960s and worked with the Legislature on the landmark Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, which shifted responsibility for mental health care from state institutions to local agencies. He was a past president of the California Mental Health Directors Association.

He worked in Sacramento before moving to Placerville as El Dorado County mental health director from 1974 to 1979. A lifelong political activist, he was elected to the Placerville City Council in 1978 and served six years helping prepare the town for growth with a new downtown parking garage and other civic other projects.

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