



July 28, 2023

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 1451 (Jackson) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino:

Every day, California’s hospitals care for a significant and growing number of people in a mental health crisis. In the years since the COVID-19 public health emergency began, economic insecurity, social isolation, health concerns, and the strain of caring for others or working on the front lines have all taken a toll.

This is why the California Hospital Association, on behalf of its more than 400 hospitals and health systems, supports Assembly Bill (AB) 1451. This bill would improve access to behavioral health crisis services by requiring health plans to cover treatment for urgent and emergent mental health and substance use disorders.

For too long, California’s public mental health system has borne full responsibility for behavioral health crisis care. Throughout the nation, crisis services are funded by state and local government programs — even though they are available to anyone in the community, regardless of insurance status. As observed by the [National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors](#), “Private insurance covers the majority of the population, yet provides only a spotty minority of the funding for crisis services.”

AB 1451 is an important step in California’s quest to achieve parity in coverage and access between primary health care and behavioral health care. For these reasons, the California Hospital Association is pleased to support AB 1451. I may be reached at Leah@LeahBarros.com or (916) 521-6878.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leah Barros", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Leah Barros
Consulting Lobbyist, California Hospital Association

cc: The Honorable Corey Jackson
The Honorable Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Agnes Lee, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Tim Conaghan, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Joe Parra, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus