



April 17, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: SB 1320 (Wahab) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Caballero:

Access to treatment for mental health and substance use disorders (SUDs) has emerged as a major issue in our health care system, and it is widely recognized that mental health and SUD conditions require treatment access at parity with those available for the treatment of physical health disorders or conditions. Moreover, behavioral health and physical mental health challenges are not mutually exclusive — many individuals who are seen by their primary care provider for medical care will have co-existing mental health or SUD conditions that may impact their physical health and treatment plan. However, our current health care system imposes an artificial distinction between behavioral health and physical health, with a siloed delivery system and limitations in care access.

On behalf of our more than 400 hospital and health system members, the California Hospital Association (CHA) is writing to express support for Senate Bill (SB) 1320. The legislation would require a plan or insurer and its delegates to establish a process for reimbursing providers for mental health and SUD treatment services integrated with primary care services and provided under a contract or policy issued, amended, or renewed on or after July 1, 2025.

The health care professionals who provide primary care are in a key position to identify patients with mental health conditions and/or SUDs and to connect them to the care and services they need. It is past time to recognize the interdependence of physical and mental health, and the role that primary care providers play in the assessment and treatment of both. The current proposal will update reimbursement policy to reflect this reality and represents an important step toward increased access to medically necessary care and mental health parity.

For these reasons, CHA requests your “AYE” vote on SB 1320.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Meghan Loper", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Meghan Loper,
Consulting Lobbyist, California Hospital Association

cc:

Senator Aisha Wahab

The Honorable Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee

Agnes Lee, Consultant Senate Appropriations Committee

Joe Parra, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus

Tim Conaghan, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus