



July 19, 2024

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

SUBJECT: AB 2161 (Arambula) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Caballero:

California's hospitals see firsthand the devastating impact of a lack of timely access to effective treatment for mental health disorders. Individuals experiencing initial symptoms of psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia, typically wait two years before receiving treatment. More efforts are needed to detect early signs of mental illness and intervene, especially to improve the lives and safeguard the future of California's adolescents and young adults.

The California Hospital Association (CHA), on behalf of more than 400 hospitals and health systems, supports Assembly Bill (AB) 2161 (Arambula, D-Fresno), which would improve California's early psychosis response.

According to UC Davis Health, studies have shown the longer the time between the first psychotic incident – such as a hallucination or delusion – and treatment, the more severe the course of the disease. Fortunately, there are service models in California and globally demonstrating that detection and intervention at the earliest signs of a psychotic disorder can change the trajectory of a young person's life.

AB 2161 would help California develop strategies to bring these services to scale as work is being done to improve the understanding of psychosis, as well as the treatments and services that are most effective. The bill would require the Department of Health Care Services to partner with the University of California to establish a Center for Mental Health Wellness and Innovations. The center would promote the widespread availability of evidence-based practices to improve behavioral health services, ensure accountability, and encourage recovery-oriented outcomes for consumers and families.

These activities are appropriate for funding through the Behavioral Health Services Act of 2024, specifically under the new Behavioral Health Services Act Innovation Partnership Fund that will be administered by the Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission.

CHA respectfully requests your “AYE” vote when AB 2161 comes before your committee.

I can be reached at Leah@LeahBarros.com or (916) 521-6878 with any questions.

Sincerely,

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

Leah Barros
Contract Lobbyist, California Hospital Association

cc: The Honorable Joaquin Arambula
The Honorable Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Agnes Lee, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Joe Parra and Tim Conaghan, Consultants, Senate Republican Caucus