



June 29, 2021

The Honorable Melissa Hurtado  
Chairwoman, Senate Human Services Committee  
State Capitol, Room 4032  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 383 (Salas) Behavioral health: older adults—SUPPORT**

Dear Chairwoman Hurtado,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists, I write in support of AB 383 (Salas), which would establish within the Department of Health Care Services an Older Adult Behavioral Health Services Administrator to oversee behavioral health services for older adults.

Older adults often do not seek the help that they need, despite that one in five older adults experience mental health concerns. The World Health Organization estimates that worldwide, 15 percent of adults age 60 and over live with mental illness. However, according to a study conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, less than one-third of all older adults in the United States who need mental health care receive it.

Mental health issues that go undiagnosed and untreated have serious impacts for older adults and their families. The study conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research found a number of deficiencies in the current structure as it relates to mental health services for older adults. Among the deficiencies highlighted in the study, it found that: a) implementation of older adult mental health services is uneven; b) MHSA outcome reporting is inadequate for measuring the reach and effectiveness of services among older adults; c) there are significant and persistent deficits in the geriatrics workforce; d) there are numerous barriers to mental health services for older adults.

This bill would establish an Older Adult Mental Health Services Administrator within the Department of Health Care Services to oversee mental health services for older adults, to be funded with administrative funds from the Mental Health Services Fund.

Specifically, the administrator would be responsible for increasing service integration, developing and identifying outcome and related indicators, and establishing a standardized geriatrics training module for mental health professionals that would include a plan to account for cultural, linguistic, ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity.

Given the rapidly growing segment of the State's population that is made up of older adults and the significant and unique challenges that older adults face as it relates to mental health, it is critical that the

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State appoint a leader and adopt a plan to increase, improve, and integrate mental health services for older adults.

For all these reasons, the California State Association of Psychiatrists is pleased to support AB 383 and would like to urge your aye vote on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yoder", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul J. Yoder  
Legislative Advocate

CC: Members, Senate Human Services Committee  
Assemblymember Rudy Salas