



July 29, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 562 (Low) Frontline COVID-19 Provider Mental Health Resiliency Act of 2021:
health care providers: mental health services – Support**

Dear Chairman Portantino,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write in support of AB 562 (Low), which would establish a mental health support system for frontline healthcare workers who have provided direct care to COVID-19 patients.

After Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, California healthcare workers have been caring for patients through multiple surges that have increased workers' susceptibility to ongoing mental and physical strain. Over the past year, healthcare workers have had to work through extreme conditions that have caused many of them to suffer from burnout and a higher risk of mental health conditions. These healthcare workers have continually toiled through traumatic environments, and additional services are imperative to treat these workers' conditions.

AB 562, as an urgency measure, would require the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to do the following within 3 months of enactment:

- Consult with the relevant healing arts boards to deliver mental and behavioral health services to licensees who provide direct services to COVID-19 patients.
- Contract with one or more third-party vendors to provide in-person services, telehealth, online psychological distress self-assessments, and measurement, and any other mental and behavioral health services DCA and relevant boards find necessary.
- Establish a system for determining eligibility in the program.
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality of participants.
- Report to the Legislature on recommendations for long-term solutions.

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To reduce costs, the bill would sunset the program within 3 years of enactment to make way for a longer-term solution. For all of these reasons, the California State Association of Psychiatrists would like to urge your aye vote on AB 562.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yoder", with a stylized, cursive script.

Paul J. Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Assemblymember Evan Low