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August 6, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1357 (Cervantes) Perinatal services: maternal mental health – SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Portantino,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists, I write in support of AB 1357 (Cervantes), which aims to improve access to postpartum depression screening, referral, treatment, and support services in medically underserved areas and areas with demonstrated needs. The bill addresses this issue by requiring the Department of Public Health (DPH) to develop and maintain a referral network of community-based mental health providers and support services on its internet website.

Under existing California law, the DPH is responsible for the implementation of a statewide, comprehensive community-based perinatal services program. The program requires the department to enter into contracts, grants, or agreements with health care providers to deliver perinatal services in medically underserved areas or areas with demonstrated need.

AB 1357 would require the DPH to develop and maintain a referral network of community-based mental health providers and support services addressing postpartum depression, prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care, neonatal and infant care services, and support groups on its internet website. The goal of the referral network is to improve access to postpartum depression screening, referral, treatment, and support services in medically underserved areas and areas with demonstrated need. Postpartum depression is a mood disorder that affects approximately 10–15% of adult mothers yearly. If implemented, AB 1357 would aid women in securing much-needed support for postpartum depression.

For these reasons, the California State Association of Psychiatrists is pleased to support AB 1357 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, cursive script.

Paul J. Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes