



September 17, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 653 (Waldron) Medication-Assisted Treatment Grant Program— REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists, I respectfully request your signature on AB 653 (Waldron), which would establish, until January 1, 2026, the Medication-Assisted Treatment Grant Program, to be administered by the Board of State and Community Corrections.

According to the author, in 2018 the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation estimated that approximately 80 percent of incarcerated individuals had Substance Abuse Disorders (SUD) and, of these, approximately 26% have SUD related to opiate drugs. Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is a whole-patient approach to treating substance use disorders that uses medication in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies. MAT is clinically effective in treating substance use disorders, including opioid and alcohol use disorders. The author states that individuals who are struggling with substance use disorders are at high risk of fatal drug overdoses in the period after release from custody (a three to eightfold increased risk of drug-related deaths within the first 2 weeks of release from prison).

Finally, the author also states that by creating a grant program for counties that can be used for drug treatment-related programs for incarcerated individuals and by expanding funding for MAT-related treatment for parolees, AB 653 will prevent fatal overdoses, reduce recidivism, and improve outcomes for those struggling with substance use disorders.

For all these reasons, the California State Association of Psychiatrists is pleased to support AB 653 and respectfully requests your signature on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yoder', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Paul J. Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Assemblymember Marie Waldron

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