



March 22, 2023

The Honorable Brian Maienschein
Chairman, Assembly Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 5640
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 665 (Carrillo) Minors: consent to mental health services – Support

Dear Chairman Maienschein,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write to you in support of AB 665, which would align existing laws by removing the additional requirement that, in order to consent to mental health treatment or counseling on an outpatient basis, or to residential shelter services, the minor must present a danger of serious physical or mental harm to themselves or to others, or be the alleged victim of incest or child abuse.

Existing law enables young people 12 and older to consent to outpatient mental health services in certain circumstances without a parent or guardian's consent. However, language in the Family Code creates a higher standard for young people utilizing Medi-Cal, only allowing them to consent to services if they present a danger of serious physical or mental harm to self or others, or are the alleged victims of incest or child abuse, a criteria their peers do not have to meet.

AB 665 addresses a deeply inequitable policy that creates barriers for youth on Medi-Cal to access mental health treatment. This bill will ensure youth on Medi-Cal no longer have to meet a higher standard by aligning the Health and Safety Code (HSC § 124260) and the Family Code (FC § 6924) sections that contain the criteria for consent. This is extremely important because roughly half of California's children are covered by Medi-Cal - the vast majority of whom are Black and children of color; there are also correlations with income levels. By creating a higher standard for youth on Medi-Cal to be able to access mental health services, existing law has a disproportionate negative impact on youth of color, and those from low-income families. This legislation aligns with the State's vision for equitable access to healthcare for all youth and is an important step towards ensuring youth can receive the help they need, when they need it. No young person should have to wait until they are in severe distress to be able to access critical mental health services.

For these reasons, CSAP is pleased to support AB 665.

Sincerely,

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

Paul Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Members, Assembly Judiciary Committee
Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo