



April 7, 2023

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7630
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 282 (Eggman) Medi-Cal: federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics – Support as amended March 13, 2023

Dear Chairman Portantino,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write to you in support of SB 282, which would require Medi-Cal to reimburse providers for mental health services they provide to patients, even if they are provided on the same day, they receive primary care services.

Under current law, California doesn't allow Medi-Cal to reimburse for same day access to services, even when both a primary care and mental health visit are needed by a patient. This presents a problem because if patients are not able to follow up on a referral to a mental health provider after they receive treatment in a primary care by a physician, the likelihood of them ever going back for treatment drops drastically. This is especially true in lower income or more remote communities, where taking time off work and arranging transportation for in-person visits can become an insurmountable challenge. Patients, especially those who are Black, Indigenous or people of color experience cultural norms and stigma that leads some to believe that mental health visits are less important and not needed, making it unlikely that the patient will return on a different day for their mental health visit. The ability to seamlessly coordinate care and create warm hand offs from a primary care provider to a mental health specialist on the same day, has proven highly effective in ensuring patients have access to care and will follow through with the recommended treatment.

Ensuring that patients have access to timely mental health interventions in the primary care setting is the right thing to do for patient wellbeing, and ultimately saves Medi-Cal money in the long run. SB 282 will make sure Medi-Cal can continue to strengthen care coordination and integration for the millions of patients the system serves, support the behavioral health initiatives being driven by the Legislature and Governor Newsom; and ensure more prevention and early intervention in mental health.

For these reasons, CSAP is pleased to support SB 282.

Sincerely,

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

Paul Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman