



March 22, 2023

The Honorable Aisha Wahab  
Chairwoman, Senate Public Safety Committee  
1021 O Street, Suite  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 513 (Wiener) Incarcerated persons: mental health – Support**

Dear Chairwoman Wahab,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write to you in support of SB 513, which would provide access to mental health therapy for incarcerated Californians, regardless of security level, sentence length, or mental health classification.

There are approximately 97,000 people incarcerated in California's prisons. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) currently provides therapy to only the most severe cases of mental illness. Currently, around 30,000 incarcerated people fall into these classifications. Though they technically have access to therapy, their sessions are often as short as 15 minutes, and they are often cycled through different therapists sporadically. These constraints make building a rapport with their therapist and establishing consistency - which are key to the success of any mental health treatment - impossible. The other 67,000 incarcerated Californians who are not classified have no access to any mental health care at all.

To make matters worse, people with mental health issues are far over-represented in California's prisons, which makes access to consistent mental health therapy even more critical. Therefore, the passage of SB 513 would help increase access to therapy, thus helping to rehabilitate incarcerated people and improve California's recidivism rate. All people incarcerated in CDCR, regardless of their security level or length of sentence, should have access to this vital form of healthcare without having to be publicly classified as having a serious mental disorder.

For these reasons, CSAP is pleased to support SB 513.

Sincerely,

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

Paul Yoder  
Legislative Advocate

CC: Members, Senate Public Safety Committee  
Senator Scott Wiener