



June 17, 2020

The Honorable Jim Woods
 Chair - Assembly Health Committee
 State Capitol, Room 6005
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 665 (Umberg) Mental Health Services Fund - OPPOSE

Dear Chair Wood and Members of the Assembly Health Committee:

All persons signing this letter are members of the **MHSA Partners Forum**, a broad coalition of organizations and individuals that have met for over a decade to discuss policy issues regarding the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The MHSA Partners Forum is made up of representatives of both community and governmental organizations including: consumers; family members; racial, ethnic, and LGBTQ communities; behavioral health providers; and state agencies.

We must oppose SB 665 (Umberg) as it authorizes a county to use MHSA funds to provide services to persons who are incarcerated in a county jail (except those who were convicted of a felony). We believe this measure undermines the essence of the MHSA which is to provide voluntary services to people in the

community. The California Code of Regulations Section 3610 clearly states: “(g) *The County may use MHSA funds for programs/services provided in juvenile halls and/or county jails only for the purpose of facilitating discharge.*”

Furthermore, existing law prohibits the use of MHSA funds to supplant other funding sources. Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5891, subdivision (a) states: “*These funds shall not be used to supplant existing state or county funds utilized to provide mental health services. ...These funds shall only be used to pay for the programs authorized in Sections 5890 and 5892. These funds may not be used to pay for any other program.*”

The exemption of the jail and prison populations from the MHSA is in place because the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation already must provide sufficient services toward rehabilitation. We do not object to MHSA funds used to support individuals with mental health conditions or substance use disorders when they transition from jail and prison to community settings.

The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) voted to oppose SB 665 at their meeting on August 22, 2019. The MHSOAC had never taken a position of “Oppose” on legislation before, but because this bill is so incongruent with the core values of the MHSA, the Commissioners felt it necessary to do so.

We believe MHSA funds should be used as they were intended: to support a variety of approaches to diverting individuals from unnecessary incarceration into appropriate treatment.

Sincerely



Heidi Strunk
President and CEO
Mental Health America of California



Stacie Hiramoto, MSW
Director
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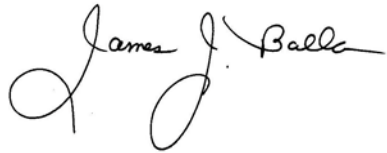
Lorraine Zeller
State ACCESS Ambassador, Bay Area
Region

(Ze/Zir/Zirs)
Poshi Walker, MSW
LGBTQ Program Director, Cal Voices
Co-Director, #Out4MentalHealth

Wesley K. Mukoyama
Wesley Kazuo Mukoyama LCSW
Member - Behavioral Health Board

Sally Zinman

Sally Zinman
Executive Director
California Association of Mental Health
Patients Rights Organizations

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James J. Balla". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "B".

James J. Balla
President and CEO
Pacific Clinics

Amanda McAllister-Wallner

Amanda McAllister-Wallner
(she/her/hers)
Director
California LGBTQ Health and Human
Services Network