



March 29, 2023

The Honorable Tom Umberg
State Senate
1021 O St., Suite 6530
Sacramento CA 95814

Re: Support for SB 250 (Umberg)

Dear Senator Umberg:

Mental Health America of California is pleased to support Senate Bill 250 (Umberg), legislation that expands California's 911 Good Samaritan law to include self-reporting of fentanyl poisonings and opioid overdoses to law enforcement and medical assistance through fentanyl testing strips and other medical devices such as smart watches.

Mental Health America of California (MHAC) is a peer-run organization that has been leading the state in behavioral health public policy and advocacy since 1957. The mission of MHAC is to ensure that people of all ages, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, language, race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, spirituality, religion, age or socioeconomic status who require mental health services and supports are able to live full and productive lives, receive the mental health services and other services that they need, and are not denied any other benefits, services, rights, or opportunities based on their need for mental health services. Along these lines, we support efforts which increase access to voluntary, culturally responsive, community-based behavioral health services.

Overdoses frequently occur when an individual ingests a pill or other substance that has been laced with fentanyl. SB 250 will encourage the use of fentanyl testing strips by eliminating the criminalization that would otherwise result from the individual's reporting of the fentanyl adulteration. In addition to guaranteeing that people receive help and not handcuffs, SB 250 provides an opportunity to get Fentanyl off the street and decrease further poisonings or overdoses from occurring to themselves and their community.

For these reasons, we support Senate Bill 250. If you or your staff have any questions, or if Mental Health America of California can be of any assistance on this or any other behavioral health bill, please do not hesitate to contact me at hstrunk@mhac.org, or our Interim Director of Public Policy, Karen Vicari at kvicari@mhacofca.org.

In Community,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heidi Strunk", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Heidi Strunk
President & CEO
Mental Health America of California

www.mhac.org