

March 29, 2023

The Honorable Joe Patterson
State Assembly
1021 O St., Suite 4530
Sacramento, CA 95814



RE: **SUPPORT** Assembly Bill 19 (Patterson)

Dear Assembly Member Patterson:

Mental Health America of California is pleased to support Assembly Bill 19 (Patterson), legislation which requires each school to have no less than two doses of naloxone onsite to be available to aid persons suffering from an opioid overdose.

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.

Assembly Bill 19 will ensure our schools are prepared to protect our youth in the event of overdose. With the dramatic increase in Fentanyl poisoning, overdoses can happen with the ingestion of a single pill. Youth who experience overdose can just as easily be first-time or infrequent users as individuals with a substance use issue. Requiring K-12 schools to maintain naloxone on campus has the potential to save the lives of countless children and youth in California.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT** Assembly Bill 19. 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