



March 24, 2023

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar
State Senate
1021 O St., Suite 6720
Sacramento CA 95814

Re: Support for Senate Bill 11 (Menjivar)

Dear Senator Menjivar:

Mental Health America of California is pleased to support your bill, Senate Bill 11, legislation that would place certain restrictions on the contracting out of mental health services provided by the California State University (CSU) system, as well as require oversight of the campus mental health services provided. This bill would also require the CSU to hire additional full-time, permanent mental health counselors to address increased student needs and work to create a pipeline for CSU students to become mental health professionals.

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.

People using community-based resources deserve the highest quality of mental health services and supports. For our youth, college campuses often provide these services through a third party which has the potential to impact the quality of care. Campuses that contract services out are not able to directly address complaints, specialized training, or diversification of staff. This bill looks to hold campuses accountable and increase the quality of care while also providing a career pathway for youth to become mental health professionals. Additionally, SB 11 will significantly increase access to much-needed mental health services on CSU campuses by increasing the provider to student ratio.

For these reasons, we support Senate Bill 11. 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,

www.mhac.org

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,



Heidi Strunk
President & CEO
Mental Health America of California