



JENNIFER KENT
DIRECTOR

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

July 10, 2018

The Honorable Assembly Member Shirley Weber
State Capitol, Room 3123
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Weber:

ASSEMBLY BILL 1215 (AS AMENDED JUNE 7, 2018) – OPPOSE

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) must inform you of its opposition to Assembly Bill 1215.

DHCS opposes AB 1215 because utilizing the Innovation (INN) component funding of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to conduct brain research is not an appropriate use of the funds and is not consistent with MHSA community mental health treatment approaches or supportive services. INN funding is to be used to develop programs that: 1) increase access to underserved groups; 2) increase the quality of services, including better outcomes; 3) promote interagency collaboration, or 4) increase access to services, including, but not limited to, services provided through permanent supportive housing. In addition, all INN projects must either introduce a new mental health practice or approach, including, but not limited to, prevention and early intervention, make a change to an existing mental health practice, including but not limited to, adaptation for a new setting or community, or introduce a new application to the mental health system of a promising community-driven practice or an approach that has been successful in nonmental health contexts or settings. DHCS does not believe that brain research falls within these parameters.

Furthermore, conducting brain research is outside of the scope of the responsibilities and expertise of county mental health departments and, as such, county staff are most likely not equipped to perform this type of research. Rather, county mental health departments provide community-based mental health services and support to children and youth with serious emotional disturbance and adults and older adults with serious mental illness. Biopsychology research is not a supportive service provided by counties. A neuroscientist in a laboratory or academic setting typically performs research of this nature. DHCS believes it is more appropriate for universities, government research institutions, or other similar entities, to conduct brain research.

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While DHCS supports the intent of creating a dynamic understanding of brain function, it must recommend a position of oppose on this bill for the reasons stated above.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 440-7500.

Sincerely,

o/s/by: CG

Carol Gallegos
Deputy Director

cc: Senate Floor Analysis
Department of Finance
CHHS Legislative Unit
GO Deputy Legislative Secretary