



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



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

July 20, 2021

The Honorable Monique Limon
Member of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 3092
Sacramento, CA 95814

SENATE BILL 293 (AS AMENDED May 20, 2021) – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Limon:

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) must inform you of its opposition to SB 293.

SB 293 aims to create standard forms across counties to allow for Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Services providers serving children and youth to spend more time providing clinical care to beneficiaries, and less time on documentation and paperwork.

Through the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Initiative, DHCS has worked extensively with stakeholder groups to develop a plan to address challenges related to documentation requirements in the Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery systems. DHCS is creating integrated and uniform tools in order to streamline the administrative process for behavioral health providers while reducing confusion and variance across counties. Moreover, the health omnibus budget trailer bill (AB 133, Committee on Budget, 2021), which implements critical components of CalAIM, authorizes DHCS to require the use of the documentation standards by Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery systems, including, but not limited to, restrictions on what Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery systems impose on their contract providers. Therefore, CalAIM will accomplish the same goal as this bill.

Additionally, the bill focuses on forms, and does not account for the fact that most documentation and processes are automated and entered into various electronic health record (EHR) systems used by county Mental Health Plans. The use of standardized forms would cause substantial provider burden by requiring forms to be adapted to EHRs or scanned, and would prevent automated data collection since data in PDFs cannot be aggregated.

It is for these reasons that DHCS must oppose SB 293.

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If you have any questions, please contact me at (916) 440-7500.

Sincerely,

O/S by Carol Gallegos

Carol Gallegos
Deputy Director

cc: Chair and Members, Assembly Health Committee
Senate Democratic Caucus
Assembly Democratic Caucus
Assembly Floor Analysis