



**California
Behavioral Health
Planning Council**

ADVOCACY • EVALUATION • INCLUSION

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July 29, 2025

The Honorable Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for AB 669 – Substance use disorder coverage

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC), I am writing to express our support for Assembly Bill (AB) 669 (Haney).

The CBHPC serves as an advisory body to the Legislature and the Administration on behavioral health policies and priorities, as outlined in Welfare and Institutions Code §§ 5771 and 5772. Our diverse membership includes individuals with lived experience of serious mental illness and substance use disorders, family members, service providers, professionals, and representatives from state departments whose work intersects with California's behavioral health system. Their perspectives are essential in our evaluation of the public behavioral health system and shape the Council's recommendations.

The passage of Senator Scott Wiener's Senate Bill 855 in 2020 represented a significant expansion in medically necessary treatment of behavioral health, however, access to care remains a challenge for many beneficiaries as it is often hindered by insurance providers. AB 669, among other things, intends to prohibit concurrent or retrospective review of medical necessity for the first 28 days of substance use disorder inpatient and outpatient treatment and establishes an expedited appeal process for denials of continued inpatient care.

Treatment for substance use may require timely intervention that is critical to prevent relapses, overdose, or in life-threatening situations, loss of life. The timelines necessary for stabilization vary depending on an individual's circumstances, which are primarily determined after a thorough



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assessment by the treatment team. Yet, insurance providers often disregard medical recommendations—denying or reversing authorization and in some cases, only authorizing partial coverage for the critical care that an individual may need. The lack of equitable consideration in authorization reviews disrupts treatment that individuals need to stabilize, further increasing the risk of relapses or overdose.

We believe that imposing this time-limited restriction will promote equity in treatment access and ensure individuals requiring medically necessary substance use disorder treatment can receive care promptly without administrative barriers.

For these reasons, the Council proudly supports AB 669. If you have any questions, please contact Jenny Bayardo, Executive Officer, at (916) 750-3778 or via e-mail at Jenny.Bayardo@cbhpc.dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Tony Vartan
Chairperson

cc: The Honorable Assemblymember Matt Haney
Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Yasamin Salari, Legislative Director
Julian Sanchez, Legislative Aide