



**California
Behavioral Health
Planning Council**

ADVOCACY • EVALUATION • INCLUSION

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MS 2706

July 9, 2025

The Honorable Mia Bonta, Chair
Assembly Committee on Health
1020 N Street, Suite 390
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: Support for SB 812 – Qualified youth drop-in center health care coverage

Dear Assemblymember Bonta:

On behalf of the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill (AB) 812 (Allen).

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 advocacy.

We support the expansion of services at youth drop-in centers as they provide a safe space for young people experiencing behavioral health challenges connecting them with resources needed for their recovery. Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by the age of 14 and worldwide, mental health challenges are the leading causes of illness and disability among young people. According to the *State of Mental Health in America 2024* report, 1 in 5 youth had at least one major depressive episode within the past year, with nearly 3 million youth who did not receive treatment. Among those who did receive treatment, only 65 percent found it helpful.



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SB 812 would expand existing law that requires health care service plan contracts or health insurance policies to cover medically necessary treatment of mental health and substance use disorders for individuals aged 25 or younger when delivered at a school site, by additionally requiring coverage when such services are provided at a qualified youth drop-in center.

Drop-in centers play a vital role in bridging gaps in the clinical care, treatment, and support for youth, extending services beyond conventional school settings by remaining accessible before and after school hours, as well as off campus. These centers offer stigma-free and less formal environments different from that of traditional mental health clinics or facilities where youth can more comfortably access support.

Expanding coverage for medically necessary mental health and substance use disorder services at qualified youth drop-in centers will help augment nontraditional resources available to a population that is often reluctant to seek support, thereby encouraging more youth to engage in care.

For these reasons, the Council proudly supports SB 812. If you have questions about our position, 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 Senator Benjamin Allen
Members, Assembly Committee on Health
Laurel Broadzinsky, Legislative Director
Adam Cooper, Fellow
Aiyana Cortez, Legislative Aide