



**California
Behavioral Health
Planning Council**

ADVOCACY • EVALUATION • INCLUSION

CHAIRPERSON
Tony Vartan

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
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June 9, 2026

The Honorable Ash Kalra, Chair
Assembly Judiciary Committee
1020 N Street, Suite 104
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Opposition to SB 1016 – Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court Program and court-ordered evaluations.

Dear Assemblymember Kalra:

On behalf of the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC), I am writing to express our opposition to Senate Bill (SB) 1016 (Blakespear).

As California's behavioral health planning council mandated in Public Law 102-321 to exist, we have a responsibility to advocate for persons with lived experience of serious mental illness. We also serve as an advisory body to the Department of Health Care Services and the Legislature 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, parents of children with serious emotional disturbances, service providers, professionals, and representatives from state departments whose work intersects with California's behavioral health system. These perspectives inform and shape our policy recommendations.

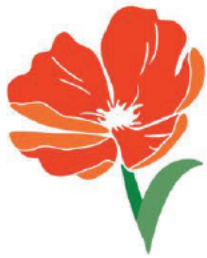
SB 1016 would, among other things, authorize a petitioner of a Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act petition to request that the court order a mental health evaluation under the Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act if the petitioner believes that the person may not be willing or able to participate in the CARE process and a CARE plan or CARE agreement due to the severity of their mental disorder or lack of insight into their mental disorder.

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The bill proposes substantial modifications to the CARE Act at a time when it has only been in full statewide implementation for approximately 1.5 years. This limited implementation period has not allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of its effectiveness, outcomes, or impacts on individuals receiving services through the CARE Act and on local behavioral health systems. Advancing significant changes prematurely before a thorough assessment has been fully conducted would shift the philosophy and operational parameters of how the CARE Act is delivered within community systems.

SB 1016 also removes individual rights and autonomy to access voluntary treatment and recovery services within community-based systems of care. This would reduce engagement, undermine trust, and impede ongoing efforts to engage people with appropriate treatment and services.

Additionally, the bill broadens the circumstances under which involuntary holds may be initiated. Expanding the criteria under which individuals may be detained for evaluation does not inherently improve the effectiveness of mental health services nor does it ensure individuals will be receptive to, participate in, or benefit from those services. Instead, we believe California should prioritize strengthening person-centered and holistic intervention strategies that reduce involuntary holds and improve systemic responses to behavioral health needs.

For these reasons, the Council respectfully opposes SB 1016. 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 Senator Catherine Blakespear
Honorable Members, Assembly Judiciary Committee
Samantha Samuelsen, Legislative Director
Annika Olsen, Fellow