

California Behavioral Health Planning Council: Patients' Rights Committee

May 2026



WHAT IS THE PATIENTS' RIGHTS COMMITTEE?

The [Patients' Rights Committee](#) (PRC) of the [California Behavioral Health Planning Council](#) is mandated under [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) § 5514](#). The committee has 7 members; 5 Planning Council members, and 2 ad hoc members appointed by the chairperson. The ad hoc members are individuals with experience providing patients' rights advocacy services to mental health patients.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PATIENTS' RIGHTS COMMITTEE?

The Patients' Rights Committee of the California Behavioral Health Planning Council is mandated in state law to advise the Department of Health Care Services and State Hospitals regarding policies and practices that affect patients' rights. The PRC also monitors, reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations for the improvement of the patients' rights system. Every behavioral health patient in California deserves to receive effective, timely, and humane treatment, or the option to decline care if appropriate.

WHAT ARE PATIENTS' RIGHTS?

California law, including the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act and other laws, state that clients and consumers of mental health services all have certain rights, even when receiving treatment involuntarily. These rights include but are not limited to: the right to receive treatment in the least restrictive way possible; the right to dignity, privacy, and humane care; the right to prompt medical care and treatment; and the right to see and receive the services of a patients' rights advocate. More detailed information on patients' rights can be found in the [patients' rights handbooks and posters](#) provided by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

WHAT ARE PATIENTS' RIGHTS ADVOCATES?

California law also requires the County Behavioral Health Director to assign patient rights advocates (PRAs) who have the responsibility for ensuring the statutory and constitutional rights of persons identified as mental health clients. Patients' Rights Advocates face significant challenges in the successful completion of their duties. These include inadequate staffing and the steadily increasing complexity of their responsibilities due to changes in law. As involuntary treatment and the LPS Act expand, there is an increasing need for PRAs to maintain the legal rights of patients receiving treatment.

PATIENTS' RIGHTS COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

The Patients' Rights Committee has identified the following areas of priority:

- Increasing PRA staffing in counties that are understaffed to protect patients' rights.
- Prioritizing the inclusion of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment in patients' rights advocacy.
- Engaging local behavioral health boards and commissions in education and advocacy.
- Tracking legislation related to the LPS Act, patients' rights, and involuntary care in California.

PATIENTS' RIGHTS COMMITTEE WORK & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

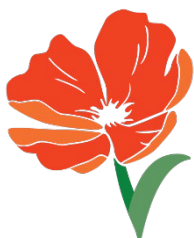
The work of the Patients' Rights Committee has included outreach to patients' rights advocates and organizations, survey engagement and analysis, written reports, legislative advocacy, and more.



**California
Behavioral Health
Planning Council**

ADVOCACY • EVALUATION • INCLUSION

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| 2017 White Paper | Title 9 Patients' Rights Advocates : An issue paper highlighting resource, training and retaliation issues in county patients' rights programs in California. |
| Assembly Bill 2316 (2018) | AB 2316 (2018) : Authored by Susan Eggman in collaboration with the PRC and the California Association of Mental Health Patients' Rights Advocates (CAMHPRA) . Established mandated training of newly hired PRAs via an online training program provided by the California Office of Patients' Rights (COPR) . |
| Assembly Bill 333 (2019) | AB 333 (2019) : Authored by Susan Eggman in collaboration with the PRC and CAMHPRA. Provides whistleblower protections against employment retaliation for patients' rights advocates who are county contractors. |
| 2020 Survey Analysis Report | Patients' Rights Committee 2020 Survey Analysis : Survey of local behavioral health boards/commissions on county mental health patients' rights advocacy. |
| 2021 Survey Analysis Report | Patients' Rights Committee 2021 Survey Analysis : 2021 Survey of County Mental Health Patients' Rights Advocates on Patients' Rights Advocacy in County Jails. |
| 2023 Analysis and Recommendations Report | Patients' Rights Advocacy in California: Analysis and Recommendations : An overview of issues affecting patients' rights advocacy in California, with analysis and recommendations. |
| LAO Report on County PRA Staffing Requirements | Legislative Analyst's Office Report on County Patients' Rights Advocate Staffing Requirements : A report by the LAO on County Mental Health Patients' Rights Advocate staffing, conducted at the request of Susan Eggman. The report includes findings and analysis of Patients' Rights Advocate duties and previous efforts to establish a staffing ratio requirement, and recommendations for further action by the state legislature. This report was released to the Patients' Rights Committee by Susan Eggman's office. |



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