

PRESS RELEASE



California Association of
Health Plans

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CAHP STATEMENT ON THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE'S APPROVAL OF SB 855 (WIENER)

SACRAMENTO, CA – The California Association of Health Plans today released the following statement regarding the approval of SB 855 by the California State Legislature on Sunday:

“Mental health and substance use disorder care and parity of care are high priorities for California’s health plans. Contrary to claims made by SB 855 proponents, California’s health plans work collaboratively with state regulators to ensure continued compliance with already well-established state and federal mental health parity laws which include comprehensive coverage for both mental health and substance use disorders.

“Unfortunately, SB 855 isn’t what it claims to be. In fact, 99.8 percent of California's health plan enrollees currently have coverage for mental health and substance use disorders at parity with other medical conditions.

“This bill recklessly defines medical necessity in a way that will undermine the ability of providers to determine what is clinically appropriate for their patients. The bill also opens the door for unlicensed providers and facilities to treat those suffering from mental health and substance use disorders, which puts vulnerable patients at risk.

“As California continues to battle its ongoing mental health crisis, it is imperative that our state focus on having the tools and people in place to meet the growing demand for care. This will only be solved by a collaborative effort among state leaders, health plans, providers, and behavioral health advocates -- an effort that is already underway under the leadership of Governor Newsom.”

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CAHP is a statewide association representing 46 full-service health plans. Through legislative advocacy, education and collaboration with other member organizations, CAHP works to sustain a strong environment in which our member plans can provide access to products that offer choice and flexibility to the more than 25 million members they serve. For more information, please visit www.calhealthplans.org or call (916) 552-2910.