



California Association for Behavior Analysis

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April 18, 2017

Honorable Anthony Portantino

State Capitol, Room 3086

Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

Fax: (916) 651-4925

RE: SB 399 OPPOSE

Dear Senator Portantino,

On behalf of the California Association for Behavior Analysis (CalABA), I regret to inform you of our ***OPPOSE position on SB 399***, legislation related to the provision of behavioral health services.

We applaud your efforts to increase access to behavioral health services for individuals with autism and their families, but believe that the current language has negative unintended consequences. As written, this bill will broaden or eliminate completely the eligibility requirements for practitioners serving this vulnerable population. Additionally, the language is unclear as to what constitutes “evidence based interventions”. This could potentially lead to individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities receiving treatments that are ineffective at best and harmful at worst.

Many people with autism and related disorders exhibit behaviors that directly jeopardize their health and safety, such as self-injury, elopement, pica (ingesting inedible items), feeding problems, and aggression. Such behaviors often result in costly and largely ineffective use of psychotropic medications, emergency room services, hospitalizations, and residential services as well as tremendous emotional and financial burdens for families. Substantial research shows that competently designed and delivered interventions are effective for reducing problem behaviors. Conversely, research has shown that interventionists who lack sufficient training can actually *increase* the occurrence of such behaviors in people with autism and other disorders. ***Without sufficient minimum standards to practice competently, consumers will be at increasing risk of harm from individuals making false claims to be qualified to provide these services.***

There are additional components of the bill that we support, including the elimination of setting of care limitations and controls around denial of services based on lack of parent participation. We look forward to working with your office on crafting language that would ensure sufficient consumer protections are in place for practitioners providing these medically necessary services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Matt McAlear, MA, BCBA
Executive Director
California Association for Behavior Analysis
mattmcalear@calaba.org

CC: Senate Health Committee Members