

AB 2804 (WALDRON): ADDICTION TREATMENT WORKFORCE EXPANSION

POSITION: The Chamber's Healthcare Committee voted to SUPPORT AB 2804 on May 9, 2018. The Public Policy Committee voted to SUPPORT AB 2804 on June 12, 2018.

RATIONALE: AB 2804 increases the workforce needed to combat addiction.

STATUS: AB 2804 was introduced by Assemblymember Marie Waldron on February 16, 2018. It was passed out of the Committee on Health and was held under submission in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SUMMARY

This bill creates a plan to expand the state's substance use disorder treatment workforce. The strategies include:

- Reporting by school districts and higher education systems to capture number of metrics related to substance use prevention activities.
- Statewide assessment for the addiction treatment workforce needs in each county.
- Incentives for cross training of licensed professionals in mental health and primary care areas
- Adopting standards for peer specialists and intervention specialists
- Planning for additional counselors with youth treatment competency
- Planning for a statewide education and training program for medication-assisted treatment.

INDUSTRY/IES IMPACTED

To meet some of the goals, the Department of Health Care Services would incur \$1.5 million in administrative costs for 1-2 years related to statewide needs assessment, regulatory changes, oversight of certifying organizations, and stakeholder engagement. A reporting mandate on school districts and other educational institutions of higher learning could result in a one-time increase of \$1 million in reimbursement from the state's General Fund.

SUPPORTERS

California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals (Sponsor)
California ACEP
Communities Recovery Resources
Recovery Professional
Associated Rehabilitation Program for Women Inc.
The Villa
Northbound
Soroptimist House of Hope
Azure Acres Recovery Center
Community Social Model Advocates
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium

OPPONENTS

None known

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

California employs fewer substance use disorder counselors per capita than the national average. The number of trained professionals providing this treatment is low, with 20,000 certified substance use disorder treatment counselors to 3.5 million people living with diagnosable substance use disorders in California. In recent years, this epidemic of opioid addiction and a significant expansion of health care coverage for substance use treatment have put pressure on the treatment system and workforce. This bill is intended to achieve goals related to the state's substance use disorder treatment workforce.

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

This effort has occurred in the past with varying levels of success. It is unclear why the current bill would be different.

MORE INFORMATION

In California, a low number of certified substance use disorder treatment counselors are helping individuals living with diagnosable substance use disorders. 20,000 certified substance use disorder treatment counselors are trying to help 3.5 million people living with diagnosable substance use disorders in California. This bill will create a plan for an emerging workforce which will strive to create the nation's first "on demand" treatment system for substance use disorder, including the foundation for California's youth treatment system which will be implemented in 2019. In addition, the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has noted complaints about workforce shortages in the substance use treatment field. This workforce expansion plan includes a goal that California will adopt a SAMHSA-recommended career ladder for substance use disorder certified and licensed personnel.