



April 4, 2023

The Honorable Jacqui Irwin
State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 6220
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: SUPPORT for AB 1437 (Irwin)

Dear Assembly Member Irwin:

I am writing on behalf of the Connection Coalition in support of Assembly Bill 1437, legislation that will improve access to crucial serious mental health medications for Medi-Cal patients by removing unnecessary prescription reauthorization barriers. This proposed bill will have little to no fiscal effect and will improve access to crucial medications for Medi-Cal patients with a serious mental health condition by removing unnecessary access barriers.

The Connection Coalition is a program of Mental Health America of California. Our mission is to reach and engage behavioral health community stakeholders in issues related to access to behavioral health services and supports; and promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Along these lines, we support efforts that will increase access to services and treatment for people with behavioral health challenges.

Assembly Bill 1437 will improve access to medications for Medi-Cal patients who have a serious mental health condition by:

- Allowing people with a serious mental health condition to have access to prescribed medication without any delays due to reauthorization requirements.
- Decreasing the likelihood of a negative outcome such as emergency room visits, hospitalizations, being unhoused, suicidal ideation, or incarceration due to lack of access.
- Supporting the choice a person with mental health challenges makes to receive behavioral healthcare.

Revising prior authorization requirements for mental health medications will improve access, adherence, and outcomes for this vulnerable population. It is for these reasons that the Connection Coalition is supporting Assembly Bill 1437. It will create impactful changes to the Medi-Cal system and significantly benefit beneficiaries with a serious mental health condition.

If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at hstrunk@mhac.org, or our Interim Director of Public Policy, Karen Vicari at kvicari@mhacofca.org.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Heidi Strunk", is written over a white background.

Heidi Strunk
President & CEO
Connection Coalition

<http://www.mhac.org/connection-coalition/>