

July 13, 2023



Submitted via Web Portal and E-mail

Assembly Member Jim Wood, Chair
Assembly Health Committee
1020 N Street, Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 326 (Eggman) Proposed Amendments

Dear Assembly Member Wood:

The California Youth Empowerment Network requests the following amendment detailed below to SB 326, the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA). The California Youth Empowerment Network (CAYEN) is a youth-led statewide network comprised of TAY Action Teams and CAYEN Board members which engages, empowers and represents Transitional Age Youth (TAY), ages 15-26, in mental health advocacy on issues that directly affect TAY. Since CAYEN's inception in 2006, CAYEN has taken many forms of action to empower TAY in their personal lives and spark progressive change in public policy.

We have included in our submission a separate, red-lined markup of the Word Document for Amendments including the requested amendment. Justification for the requested amendment is as follows:

Page 66. Amend Section 5845 to include two Transition Age Youth (TAY) aged 16-26 at the time of appointment on the Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission

5848. (a) The Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission is hereby established to administer grants, identify key policy issues and emerging best practices, and promote high-quality programs implemented pursuant to Section 5892 through the examination of data and outcomes.

(b) (1) The commission shall replace the advisory committee established pursuant to Section 5814.

(2) The commission shall consist of 22 voting members as follows:

(A) The Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee.

(B) The Superintendent of Public Instruction or the Superintendent's designee.

(C) The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Health, the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Human Services, or another member of the Senate selected by the President pro Tempore of the Senate.

(D) The Chairperson of the Assembly Committee on Health or another Member of the Assembly selected by the Speaker of the Assembly.

(E) A county behavioral health director.

(F) (i) The following individuals, all appointed by the Governor:

(I) One adult or older adult who has or who has had a serious mental illness.

(II) One adult or older adult who has or who has had a substance use disorder.

(III) Two Transition Age Youth ages 16-26 at the time of appointment to the Commission.

(IV) A family member of an adult or older adult with a serious mental illness.

Justification: The voices of our TAY with lived experience are essential to the BHSOAC. Additionally, family members should never outnumber people with lived experience on boards or commissions. TAY with lived experience possess unique and vital knowledge that is separate and distinct from the knowledge possessed by family members.

Currently, SB 326 includes 4 family members and 2 individuals with lived experience. CAYEN recommends that there be two additional people with lived experience on the BHSOAC, and these members should be Transition Age Youth (TAY). Half of the family representation in SB 326 is parents of children and youth. This is because the needs and experiences of children and youth with behavioral health challenges are very different than the needs and experiences of adults. When parents are represented, TAY should be equally represented to complement the family perspectives. Youth and young adults on commissions are often subject to tokenism. To avoid tokenism, it is essential that at least two TAY serve on the BHSOAC to provide support and encourage dialogue.

CAYEN is grateful for the opportunity to offer the suggested amendment to SB 326 to strengthen TAY representation within the BHSA. If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at dthirakul@mhac.org, or our Interim Director of Public Policy, Karen Vicari at kvicari@mhacofca.org.

In Community,



Danny Thirakul
Public Policy Coordinator
California Youth Empowerment Network