



YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Use Your Voice

March 25th, 2024

The Honorable Richard D. Roth
Chair, Senate Health Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7510
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1319 (Wahab) Increased Access to Behavioral Health Treatment –
SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Roth:

Youth Leadership Institute is writing to express our support of SB 1319 (Wahab), which will streamline the process for converting unused skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) to behavioral health facilities to ensure they can operate in a timely manner, as a response to the increased need for behavioral health facilities in the state. This bill is part of the Senate's bipartisan legislative package "Working Together for a Safer California."

yli partners with thousands of youth across the state, the majority of whom are low-income youth of color. In recent years, mental health and substance use have become the core issues around which most of our programming focuses. Our youth depend on us to pass policies that work effectively to address these health crises.

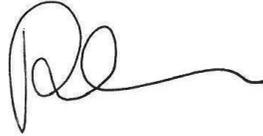
Existing law requires skilled nursing facilities that intend to provide behavioral health services in a separate unit of the facility to seek approvals from multiple state departments including: the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

Currently, these state departments require applicants to complete the application process and obtain approval from each department before seeking approval from another department. This can significantly extend

the total time needed to obtain approvals from state departments and delay the time to when a behavioral health facility can open and become operational.

In an effort to address the fentanyl crisis, SB 1319 contributes to the Senate's evidence-based approach to increase access to treatment facilities by directing the relevant state departments to allow applicants to submit applications and documentation simultaneously with the submission of applications to other state departments so that all involved departments can begin reviewing documents for completeness. For these reasons, we respectfully request an **AYE** vote on **SB 1319 (Wahab)**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PATRICIA BARAHONA

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Youth Leadership Institute