

April 8, 2019

The Honorable Toni Atkins
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 66 (Atkins) Medi-Cal: federally qualified health center and rural health clinic services. – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Atkins:

On behalf of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, we are pleased to support your bill, SB 66 which would allow counties and health care providers to receive Medi-Cal reimbursement for up to two visits a day at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) or Rural Health Clinics (RHC), such as when a patient has a medical visit as well as a behavioral health or dental visit on the same day at the same location.

This bill is about integrating health care services and ensuring that people can access the care they need when they need it. For instance, the impacts of untreated mental health and substance use disorders have become increasingly visible throughout the state. FQHCs and RHCs often partner with counties to provide access to both health care and substance use disorder or mental health services for underserved populations and in geographically diverse areas. These clinics were designed to provide primary care services and decrease health disparities, and in recent years have become an important resource for the successful integration of primary health and behavioral health needs.

As these community-based clinics provide integrated care, they require an increased financial commitment from the state. Under the current reimbursement system, if a patient visits their medical provider and mental health provider on the same day, the FQHC or RHC will only receive a payment for one of the providers. This process in some cases leads to providers scheduling mental health appointments on subsequent days or requiring clinics to take on an increased financial burden. It also burdens the patient, who must arrange transportation and time off of work or caregiving for single appointments on different days.

Passage of this bill would greatly benefit residents of Monterey County. The ability of Medi-Cal providers to bill for two visits per day, will assure patients receive all services needed at the time of their visit. This will allow providers to better treat the person as a whole and increase access to mental health services for a community that still perceives stigma associated with addressing mental health challenges. For these reasons we support SB 66. Please contact Monterey County's Public Policy advisors, Jennifer Capitolo or Ashley Walker of Nossaman LLP at 916-442-8888, if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

John M. Phillips
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Bill Monning
Senator Anna Caballero
Assemblyman Mark Stone
Assemblyman Robert Rivas
California State Association of Counties

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