

July 22, 2020



Submitted Via Web Portal

Honorable Richard Pan M.D., Chair
Health Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 5114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1976 (Eggman) as amended May 4, 2020 – Oppose

Dear Chair Pan:

Mental Health America of Los Angeles (MHALA), a non-profit advocacy and provider organization, strongly opposes AB 1976 which will be heard in the Senate Health Committee on July 29, 2020.

Outpatient commitment efforts, such as Laura's Law, risk transforming the mental health system into a vehicle of social control. **Voluntary** assertive community treatment is a proven methodology, and community support teams are a critical step in community integration. The non-coercive approach of community-based treatment is essential to its effectiveness in promoting recovery and the long-term autonomy and integrity of the individual receiving care.

Currently, California lacks the treatment resources necessary to meet the needs of people willing to participate voluntarily in their recovery from mental health conditions. All mental health treatment programs should provide adequate, community-based outpatient services to consumers in their communities. Without adequate local services, implementation of involuntary outpatient commitment will underserve people who are voluntarily seeking treatment without any net gain in the number of people receiving outpatient services

Studies and own experience as a provider have repeatedly shown that when persons with even the most serious mental illnesses are provided with appropriate, comprehensive and voluntary community mental health services, they succeed. Unless there is a full array of community mental health services, mandatory outpatient treatment has not been shown to add to the effectiveness of community mental health services and, indeed, may interfere with recovery by compromising personal responsibility and lowering self-esteem.

For these reasons we ask that you and your fellow Committee Members vote no on AB 1976 when it comes before you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad Costello", is written over a faint horizontal line.

Chad Costello, CPRP
Vice President, Policy

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Health Committee