**Put on your organization’s letterhead**

Sample support letter – AB 665 (Carrillo)

**SUBMIT ONLINE** to SENATE Judiciary Committee (You will need to create an organization account) <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/>

**DEADLINE: EOD (**End of Day) Tues. June 6, 2023

**AND SEND COPY** to Angela Vázquez at The Children’s Partnership (avazquez@childrenspartnership.org)

DATE

To: The Honorable Senator Thomas J. Umberg

Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 665 (Carrillo): Mental health consent parity for Medi-Cal recipients – SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Umberg:

On behalf of <INSERT YOUR AGENCY’S NAME HERE>, we are pleased to support AB 665 authored by Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo, which would create mental health consent parity for Medi-Cal recipients.

[Describe your agency and the children/families you serve, and/or your interest in this bill.]

AB 665 addresses a deeply inequitable policy that creates barriers for youth on Medi-Cal to access mental health treatment. Existing law enables young people 12 and older to consent to outpatient mental health services in certain circumstances without a parent or guardian’s consent. However, language in the Family Code creates a higher standard for young people utilizing Medi-Cal, only allowing them to consent to services if they present a danger of serious physical or mental harm to self or others, or are the alleged victims of incest or child abuse, a criteria their peers do not have to meet. This bill will ensure youth on Medi-Cal no longer have to meet a higher standard by aligning the Health and Safety Code (HSC § 124260) and the Family Code (FC § 6924) sections that contain the criteria for consent.

Youth seeking mental health services already face widespread social stigma and centuries of systemic oppression by government programs that create legitimate fears for families deciding whether to engage in services. Unfortunately, existing law contains an additional barrier for youth on Medi-Cal who seek services. Providers find that obtaining consent for a youth who needs mental health services is often complicated by the parent or caretakers’ beliefs and stigma about mental health care. Over half of surveyed LGBTQ+ youth reported that not being able to get permission from their parent or guardian was sometimes or always a barrier to accessing mental health services. Barring providers from billing Medi-Cal for certain services without parental consent may prove insurmountable when parents or caretakers are unwilling or unable to give consent. Ultimately, this may prevent youth from accessing services altogether.

Roughly half of California’s children are covered by Medi-Cal - the vast majority of whom are Black and children of color. By creating a higher standard for youth on Medi-Cal to be able to access mental health services, existing law has a disproportionate negative impact on youth of color. This legislation aligns with the State’s vision for equitable access to healthcare for all youth and is an important step towards ensuring youth can receive the help they need, when they need it. No young person should have to wait until they are in severe distress to be able to access critical mental health services.

[If applicable, include a story in which a youth you were serving was unable to access mental health services due to the barriers of Medi-Cal minor consent. If possible, describe the impact this had on the youth and/or the family.]

<Our organization> is pleased to support this critical effort to reduce barriers for youth in accessing necessary mental health services and residential shelter services. Requiring young people from low-income families to delay sensitive treatment until they are in serious distress ultimately places youth at unnecessary risk, a risk their higher-income peers do not face. It is for these reasons that we are proud to support AB 665 and respectfully request your AYE vote when it comes to the committee.

Sincerely,

<AGENCY>

CC:

Members, Senate Judiciary Committee

Angela M. Vázquez, The Children’s Partnership (avazquez@childrenspartnership.org)