



ASSEMBLYWOMAN

Wendy Carrillo

DISTRICT 52



## Assembly Bill (AB) 665: Mental Health Consent Parity for Medi-Cal Recipients

### SUMMARY

AB 665 would create parity between youth receiving Medi-Cal and their peers receiving private insurance when self-consenting to utilize mental health services.

### BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM

California and the Nation are facing a youth mental health crisis. A recent survey from the CDC shows that depression rates among teens have gone from 28 percent in 2011 to 42 percent in 2021. The need for more services is clear. However, the roughly half of California’s kids, the majority children of color, who are covered by Medi-Cal are not being adequately served. Less than 19% of teenagers on Medi-Cal received screenings for depression and a follow up plan in 2020. This is despite the fact that nearly 1 in 3 adolescents in California reported symptoms that meet the criteria for serious psychological distress.

Surveys show that making parental opt-in mandatory reduces the likelihood that teens will seek timely treatment, especially among LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth. California recognized this in 2010 and addressed it with SB 543, which allowed youth 12 and up to consent to their own mental health care. However, SB 543 explicitly excludes youth on Medi-Cal from utilizing their benefits when their parents have not granted consent to be billed for mental health care.

### SOLUTION

This bill would align the standards of mental health care consent for all young people in California by no longer requiring youth on Medi-Cal to meet a higher standard of need than their peers on private insurance; by eliminating the requirement that young people on Medi-Cal be in imminent danger of self-harm or the victim of child abuse in order for the Medi-Cal plan to pay for services.

Additionally this bill still allows providers, after consulting with the youth, to work with the youth’s parent(s) as a part of their treatment.

### SUPPORT

The Children’s Partnership (Co-Sponsor)  
California Alliance of Child and Family Services (Co-Sponsor)  
GenerationUp (Co-Sponsor)  
CalVoices (Co-Sponsor)  
National Center for Youth Law (Co-Sponsor)  
National Health Law Program (Co-Sponsor)  
The California Children’s Trust (Co-Sponsor)

### BILL STATUS

Introduced 02/13/23 – Pending Referral

### STAFF CONTACT

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