


MEMORANDUM

DATE	October 31, 2017
TO	Board of Psychology
FROM	 Jason Glasspiegel Central Services Coordinator
SUBJECT	Agenda Item #19(b)(1)(A) – AB 244 (Cervantes) Maternal Mental Health

Background:

This bill would create a pilot program, in counties that elect to participate, to increase the capacity of health providers that serve pregnant and postpartum women up to one year after delivery to effectively prevent, identify, and manage postpartum depression and other mental health conditions. The pilot program may include the following: a consultation program utilizing telehealth and e-consult technologies, training and toolkits on screening, assessment, and the range of treatment options, coordination of care for program participants, and access to perinatal psychiatric consultations for program participants. The pilot program would be privately funded and require a report to the Legislature regarding the pilot programs results within six months of the end of the pilot.

AB 244 is a great first step in increasing screening and treatment for women experiencing perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, but could potentially exclude one of the most critical components for treatment, which are psychotherapy services provided by psychologists and other licensed mental health professionals. By only identifying “perinatal psychiatric consultation”, this could unnecessarily inhibit pilot programs from utilizing psychologists and other licensed mental health professionals to provide psychotherapy services and limit the timeframe for providing services, resulting in suboptimal use of limited program resources.

On April 21, 2017, the Board took a “Support if Amended” position on AB 244 instructing staff to seek specified amendments to add “postpartum” and “psychological” to the bill to cover the full spectrum of perinatal and postpartum care that is required during pregnancy and a year after giving birth.

The following week, staff called the author’s office to discuss the amendments the Board was seeking and was informed that the bill is now a 2-year bill and will not be moving for the remainder of this legislative year. Staff will submit our formal position in writing to the author’s office and work with the author when the bill is taken up next year.

Location: Assembly Committee on Health

Status: 4/18/2017 In committee, set first hearing. Hearing canceled at the request of author.

Action Requested:

No action is required at this time. Staff will work with the author to request the Board's suggested amendments when AB 244 is taken up next year.