



SB 626 – Maternal Health Screenings and Treatments

SUMMARY

SB 626 strengthens California’s maternal mental health system by improving screening, follow-up care coordination, and health plan accountability to ensure timely access to care.

BACKGROUND

Maternal or Perinatal Mental Health (PMH) disorders, including postpartum depression, anxiety, and psychosis, are the most common complications of pregnancy and a leading cause of maternal mortality. Yet 75% of those affected by perinatal mental health concerns do not receive treatment despite the proven benefits of early intervention.

These conditions affect approximately 1 in 3 birthing parents, with Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities disproportionately impacted. Untreated PMH disorders contribute to \$2.4 billion in healthcare costs annually in California and lead to long-term negative health consequences, including a heightened risk of suicide, SIDS, and multigenerational impacts on the parent and child’s long-term physical, emotional, and developmental health.

PROBLEM

Despite their prevalence, PMH conditions remain under-addressed within the healthcare system. Current laws lack sufficient resources and accountability to ensure timely, effective care. Untreated PMH disorders can lead to long-term

consequences, including chronic mental health conditions, impaired parent-child bonding, adverse childhood experiences, and behavioral and developmental delays in children. They also contribute to higher rates of infant mortality and adverse birth outcomes such as low birth weight and preterm birth.

SOLUTION

To support the perinatal mental health of California’s birthing people and improve outcomes for families.

Specifically, this bill:

1. Require licensed perinatal providers to offer maternal mental health screening and ensure patients who screen positive are offered or receive appropriate clinical evaluation, and when indicated, treatment or referral, consistent with applicable standards of care and within their scope of practice.
2. Require health plans and insurers to provide case management and care coordination for patients who screen positive, helping families access behavioral health navigation, treatment, community support, and timely follow-up care.
3. Strengthen accountability by integrating maternal mental health screening, referral, care coordination, and follow-up into existing health plan quality improvement and population health management processes.



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SUPPORT

Black Women for Wellness Action Project (Co-Sponsor)
CA Coalition for Perinatal Mental Health & Justice (Co-Sponsor)
Maternal Mental Health NOW (Co-Sponsor)
Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health (Co-Sponsor)
PSI-California (Co-Sponsor)
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of University Women CA
Be Mom Aware
California Access Coalition
California Behavioral Health Association
California Chapter of Postpartum Support Intl.
California Life Sciences Association
California Perinatal Wellness Alliance
California Strategies and Advocacy
California WIC Association
Claris Health
County of Fresno
Diversity Uplists, Inc.
Ethical Family Building
First 5 California
Having Our Say Coalition
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality
Medical Board of California
National Council of Jewish Women LA
Postpartum Health Alliance
Return to Zero: H.O.P.E.
Sacramento Maternal Mental Health Collaborative
South Asian Network

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
The Crow
Western Center on Law and Poverty

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