



For Immediate Release  
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## Governor signs Ramos bill to close gap in youth psychiatric services

SACRAMENTO—Gov. Gavin Newsom tonight signed a measure to create, license and regulate psychiatric crisis residential treatment for children and youth was sent to the governor in the early evening today. The measure is authored by Assemblymember James C. Ramos (D-Highland).

“Since 2008, mental health needs have accounted for the largest share of hospital admissions of children ages 0 to 17 in California. California is not prepared to care for the increasing number of pediatric mental health crises,” Ramos said. “This gap forces families to scramble during a crisis to seek life-saving care, and they often wait days or weeks in a hospital without mental health services for their children. That’s unacceptable and creates untold hardship, difficulty, and trauma. We must do better to ensure children’s well-being.”

AB 2317 would create a new licensing category in state statute to establish children’s residential treatment facilities and help ensure in-state access to care for families and their children. No such treatment option exists now in California. Ramos’s measure would require that regulations and certification align with federal Medicaid provisions to maximize federal financing and aid in ensuring affordable access. AB 2317 would help counties and their community-based providers develop crisis residential programs with an appropriate licensing category. Ramos’s measure would also require that regulations and certification align with federal Medicaid provisions to maximize federal financing.

Ramos noted that The Annie E. Casey Foundation reports the state’s children experienced the second largest increase in anxiety and depression in the country from 2016 to 2020. This data includes children ages three to 17. COVID-19 has only exacerbated those numbers, and while California has begun to [ramp up resources](#) one critical gap is the lack of children’s crisis residential services.

Christine Stoner-Mertz, CEO of the California Alliance of Child and Family Services whose organization is the bill’s sponsor said, “Governor Gavin Newsom’s signature on AB 2317 fills a life-saving gap for youth in crisis. Finally, California will have the opportunity to help children recover from crisis situations with appropriate services in home-like settings, rather than long stays in emergency rooms that aren’t designed to meet their needs. California’s non-profit community-based organizations serving children and families are grateful to Assemblymember Ramos for leading on this urgently needed solution, as California’s youth face an unprecedented mental health crisis.”

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, approximately 20 percent of youth between ages 13 and 18 live with a mental health condition. Ramos said an estimated three out of four children in the United States do not receive the mental health services they need, and suicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescents. Also underscoring the need is a January 2015 report from California's leading mental health organizations, "[Kids in Crisis: California's Failure to Provide Appropriate Services for Youth Experiencing a Mental Health Crisis.](#)"

AB 2317 is supported by CA Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies, California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies, California Children's Hospital Association, Chief Probation Officers of California, Childhelp, County Behavioral Health Directors Association, County Welfare Directors Association of California, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services, Family Care Network Inc., Greater Hope Foundation for Children INC, Healthier Kids Foundation, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter, Pacific Juvenile Defense Center, Saga Foundation, San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health, San Bernardino County, San Diego Center for Children, Seneca Family of Agencies, SEIU California, Sierra Vista Child and Family Services, Steinberg Institute, Sycamores, The California Children's Trust, The Future Talent of Silicon Valley and Youth Transportation Organization.

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*Assemblymember James C. Ramos proudly represents the 40<sup>th</sup> Assembly district which includes Highland, Loma Linda, Mentone, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, and San Bernardino. He is the first and only California Native American serving in the state's legislature. He chairs the Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.*