



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE ▪ BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90210

Julian A. Gold, M.D., Mayor

August 14, 2023

The Honorable Chris Holden
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 5650
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 326 (Eggman) Behavioral Health Services Act and AB 531 (Irwin) Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act of 2023
Mayor of Beverly Hills – Support

Dear Chair Holden,

As the Mayor of Beverly Hills, I write in support of SB 326 and AB 531, a historic legislative package championed by Assemblymember Irwin, Senator Eggman, and Governor Newsom. The primary aim of this legislation is to revitalize the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and to secure a \$4.86 billion bond. This will pave the way for the establishment of 10,000 new behavioral health community beds and housing facilities throughout the state, intended to cater to Californians of all age brackets who grapple with severe mental health challenges and substance abuse issues. This letter expresses only my individual views and does not reflect the views of the City Council of the City of Beverly Hills.

The state of California is at a critical juncture and this crisis requires decisive and wide-ranging measures. It's alarming that of the 161,548 Californians living on the streets, almost 40,000 battle serious mental health problems, and over 36,000 are ensnared in chronic substance abuse. Recent findings from a RAND study highlighted a deficit of at least 6,000 behavioral health beds in the state. This dearth in capacity culminates in extended stays in restrictive environments and medical facilities, further exacerbating the prevailing crisis. Even more concerning is the situation among our state's veterans. With over 10,000 homeless veterans every night, a staggering 50 percent or more grapple with mental health issues, while approximately 70 percent are afflicted by substance abuse issues. The bonds under consideration earmarks a segment of its funds to aid our deserving veterans.

The urgency to reshape our strategy, prioritizing the mental well-being of our fellow Californians—especially those battling severe mental issues, those vulnerable to homelessness, and the veterans without a roof over their heads—cannot be overstated.

These revolutionary initiatives are geared towards establishing accountable housing and fostering reforms that yield tangible outcomes. They seek to ensure every Californian has the chance to avail themselves of essential behavioral health facilities and secure

appropriate housing within their communities, thereby fulfilling a longstanding commitment by our state's leadership.

Furthermore, this endeavor will dovetail with and enhance California's existing advancements in behavioral health care, such as the CARE Act; the Children's and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative; the expansion of behavioral health services under CalAIM; historical funding in behavioral health infrastructure and housing; initiatives for veterans' health and housing; and investments in the behavioral health workforce. It is for these reasons that I am proud to support AB 531 and SB 326.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julian A. Gold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Julian A. Gold, M.D.
Mayor, City of Beverly Hills