



Los Angeles  
County Council

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Jim Wood, Chair  
Assembly Health Committee  
State Capitol, Room 6005  
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 1971 (Santiago and Friedman), Mental Health Services and Gravely Disabled

Dear Assembly Member Wood:

I write in support of AB 1971 which would include medical treatment within the definition of gravely disabled, but only under circumstances where the lack or failure to receive such treatment would result in substantial physical harm or death -- recognizing that urgent medical treatment is a basic need as necessary to wellbeing as food, shelter, or clothing.

AB 1971 also maintains an individual's right to be heard in court when detained involuntarily, and gravely disabled would need to be determined beyond a reasonable doubt; therefore, maintaining all statutorily protected safeguards and civil liberties under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act.

This measure is critical to help the growing number of homeless individuals suffering from mental illness as this vulnerable population could disproportionately account for the increase in death rates among the homeless population. Mental illness can often act as a barrier to seeking or accepting necessary medical treatment, and individuals with a mental disorder are at the highest risk of dying on the streets. The inclusion of medical treatment for those with mental illness is not only humane care, but it would also promote wellbeing and recovery.

I join the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Steinberg Institute and the California Psychiatric Association, in urging your support.

**Let us make sure we give the kind of care we expect of each other to those who are not well enough to know they cannot survive without it.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brittney Weissman".

Brittney Weissman, Executive Director

c: Each Member and Consultant,  
Assembly Health Committee  
Assembly Member Miguel Santiago  
Assembly Member Laura Friedman