

# SB 294 Will Improve Access to Needed Mental Health Care for California's Youth.



**SB 294 is a lifesaving health plan oversight bill** that will streamline the grievance and Independent Medical Review (IMR) process for California's youth, ensuring that health plans can no longer continue to wrongfully deny care with no oversight. It will also save families, county behavioral health systems, and taxpayer money when commercial plans deny care and youth must seek care elsewhere.

## ✓ **SB 294 Will Improve Access to Care and Save Lives**

*SB 294 Will Improve Access to Needed Mental Health Care, Saving Youth's Lives and Reducing Family Burden*

- Passing SB 294 would maintain existing grievance and IMR processes, while ensuring that *all* youth denied care have the opportunity to access these steps. Many families are not even informed of the grievance process, nor do they have the time or ability to fight plans for care.
- Automatically reviewing all denials/modifications, while offering multiple opportunities for physician and patient input, will ensure equitable access to timely care for vulnerable mental health patients.
- SB 294 ensures that families do not have to be experts on the grievance or IMR process in order to access care.
- The bill protects patient privacy by requiring patients to give consent prior to sharing their private health information sent to a third party during an automatic IMR.

## ✓ **SB 294 Will Reduce Health Care Costs**

*SB 294 is a Crucial Health Plan Oversight Bill that Will Save Lives and Money.*

- SB 294 will reduce costs for California's county behavioral health systems and families seeking care.
- SB 294 will allow plans the opportunity to self-correct wrongful denials and modifications during the auto-grievance process, thereby creating less work for DMHC.
- SB 294 will increase the access to and utilization of the IMR process, which is paid for by plans.
- SB 294 ensures that families do not have to initiate an already burdensome grievance and appeals process to get care for their children.
- The existing delays in accessing mental health care due to health plan denials and modifications result in increased out-of-pocket expenses for enrollees and endanger the lives of young people. SB 294 will fix this.

**SB 294 is crucial for enforcing mental health parity and protecting further harm to California's youth. It will ensure that taxpayer dollars are being used effectively to hold health plans accountable in providing lifesaving care, while ensuring that time, money, or health literacy are not barriers for families seeking physician-approved care.** This bill has been informed by collaboration with mental health professionals, families, advocacy groups, health plans, and other stakeholders, to ensure that patient privacy and physician involvement are prioritized. This bill does not change the existing IMR process, it merely ensures that plans are held responsible for *all* denials of youth mental health care.

## Vote YES on SB 294

- ✓ **Parents no longer have to fight for the care their children desperately need**
- ✓ **Holds health plans accountable to care they already promised**
- ✓ **Reduces out of pocket costs for families**
- ✓ **Reduces costs to counties to cover care when commercial plans say no**
- ✓ **Will save lives by ensuring care is provided**

# Vote YES on SB 294