Insert your name

Insert your address

Insert your City, State Zip Code

March 7, 2018

The Honorable Insert Senator or Assembly Member First and Last Name

State Capitol

Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2804 (Waldron): Support

Dear Insert Senator/Assemblymember Last name,

As a professional who works treating addiction in your district, I would like to convey my support of Assembly Bill 2804. there are an estimated 3.5 million persons with diagnosable substance use disorders in California, yet there are less than 20,000 substance use disorder treatment counselors currently certified by private credentialing bodies in California. California employs fewer SUD counselors per population than the national average.

There can be no increase in access to addiction treatment in California without a corresponding increase in the number of competently trained professionals to deliver it. Californians willing and ready to enter treatment die while waiting for openings at treatment programs. Currently 41% of the substance use disorder treatment workforce is identified as “registered” (have not met testing and education requirements). Employers cannot fill staff vacancies to meet demand for services, while low wages and high turnover created by the lack of a career ladder and disjointed professional standards plague the addiction treatment job market.

In an effort to end systemic shortages of competent substance use disorder counselors, AB 2804 creates planning for a 21st Century substance use disorder workforce to address the opioid crisis by requiring a statewide needs assessment for the addiction treatment workforce; outlines incentives for cross training other licensed professionals in mental health and primary care areas; and addresses planning for additional counselors with youth treatment competency. Expanding and improving the substance use disorder workforce supports the goal of creating the nation’s first “on demand” treatment system for substance use disorder and creates the foundation for California’s youth treatment system set to be implemented in 2019 with funding from the Adult Use of Marijuana Act (Proposition 64).

Please cast your “aye” vote for Assembly Bill 2804.

Sincerely,

Insert signature or s/your first and last name

Insert name

Insert title