

AB 425: Evidence Based- SUD Treatment in Certified Programs

Assemblymember Laurie Davies

IN BRIEF

AB 425 would require all alcohol or other substance use disorder recovery or treatment services programs that provide those services to adopt ASAM Standards and have evidence-based practices as the minimum standard.

THE ISSUE

In 2018, the Legislature approved ASAM standards and evidence-based practices as the minimum standards for SUD treatment in inpatient licensed facilities (SB 823)¹. The following year, a bill proposed to extend the same standards to outpatient treatment programs, but it was deferred into 2020 when its author termed out. DHCS only certifies programs for adolescents in DSS licensed facilities; as a result, adolescent treatment is not presently required to be evidence-based.

In January, 2023, the provisions of the 2018 defined licensing requirements had to be met in all licensed facilities. As of the fall of 2023, the state of California instituted mandatory certification for SUD treatment programs without requiring ASAM standards and evidence-based practices. Thus, standards for licensed facilities and standards for certified programs continue to differ needlessly.

DHCS itself indicates that evidence-based standards are a necessary part of recovery. By raising treatment standards instead of settling for the status quo, we can save lives and increase the likelihood of recovery by requiring already approved, evidence-based standards.

CURRENT LAW

Existing law grants the authority to license adult alcoholism or substance use recovery or treatment facilities to the State Department of Health Care Services. Under existing law, no person or entity may operate such a facility without licensure by the department.

Existing law grants the authority to license adolescent treatment facilities to the State Department of Social Services.

Through existing law, DHCS requires mandatory certification of SUD treatment programs.

SOLUTION

Under AB 425 the Department of Health Care Services would be required to hold the same standards for outpatient treatment programs as licensed SUD treatment facilities already have. Treatment programs running in DSS facilities for adolescents would finally be held to the same standards as those in adult licensed facilities. ASAM standards and evidence-based practices would be adopted by January 2026. AB 425 would have no impact on peer-to-peer community support programs (such as Alcoholics Anonymous).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Bill text and status can be found at:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB425

¹ https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB823