



DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

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DMH Legislative Report for the Behavioral Health Commission – March 6, 2026

This report provides a 2025-2026 Legislative Session summary including important upcoming dates. It also includes an updated list of DMH's priority bills and bills of interest introduced during this session. The Department will continue identifying and analyzing newly introduced legislation throughout the session and updates on our priority list of bills that may have an impact on our operations and the public mental health safety net.

2025-2026 Legislative Session Summary

The Legislature introduced around 1,800 bills this session, marking a historic low compared to previous years (2,400 bills were introduced in 2025). Due to the overwhelming number of bills being introduced, in 2024, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas limited the number of bills Legislators can introduce to thirty-five per every two-year session. Bills need to be in print for 30 days before being heard by the committee; committee hearings will most likely begin starting mid-March. The last day for the legislature to introduce bills for this legislative cycle was February 20, 2026.

Priority Legislation

The analysis and status updates offered below should be considered preliminary and may be subject to change as bills go through committee and potential amendments in the 2026 legislative session.

- **SB 903 Mental Health Professionals: AI Intelligence (Padilla)**, introduced on January 21, 2026, prohibits a licensed professional from engaging in the use of artificial intelligence to assist in providing supplementary support in therapy or psychotherapy where the client's therapeutic session is recorded or transcribed unless the patient or their authorized representative is informed that artificial intelligence will be used and provides consent.

DMH Analysis: The Department is in the process of analyzing the impacts of this bill on DMH programs.

DMH Position: No position taken yet.

County Position: No position taken yet.

CBHDA Position: Support.

Current Status: Referred to Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development committee.

- **SB 1221 Lanterman-Petris-Short Act: conservatorships (Stern)**, introduced on February 19, 2026, requires the definition of gravely disabled to be evaluated based upon a person's ability to provide for those basic personal needs outside of an incarcerated setting

DMH Analysis: The Department is in the process of analyzing the impacts of this bill on DMH programs.

DMH Position: No position taken yet.
County Position: No position taken yet.
CBHDA Position: Oppose.

Current Status: Referred to Senate Health committee.

- **SB 1373 Mental Health Diversion (Grove)**, introduced on February 20, 2026, adds to the list of crimes for which a defendant is prohibited from being placed into a diversion program to include, among other things, attempted murder, kidnapping, carjacking, and human trafficking.

DMH Analysis: The Department is in the process of analyzing the impacts of this bill on DMH programs.

DMH Position: No position taken yet.
County Position: No position taken yet.
CBHDA Position: No position taken yet.

Current Status: Referred to Senate Public Safety committee.

- **SB 1401 Criminal procedure: competence to stand trial (Stern)**, introduced on February 20, 2026, authorizes a county behavioral health agency and jail medical provider to share confidential medical records and other relevant information with the court for the purpose of determining likelihood of eligibility for behavioral health services and programs.

DMH Analysis: The Department is in the process of analyzing the impacts of this bill on DMH programs.

DMH Position: No position taken yet.
County Position: No position taken yet.
CBHDA Position: Oppose.

Current Status: Referred to Senate Public Safety committee.

- **AB 46 Diversion (Nguyen)**, amended on February 13, 2026, requires that the diagnosis with a mental disorder be within 5 years before the alleged offense to be eligible for diversion.

DMH Analysis: AB 46 would impose unnecessary restrictions that are not evidence-based on mental health diversion and would likely reduce the number of people who are able to participate in beneficial mental health diversion programs.

DMH Position: Concerned.
County Position: Oppose.
CBHDA Position: Oppose.

Current Status: Referred to Senate Public Safety committee.

- **AB 96 Mental Health Services: Peer Support Specialist Certification (Jackson)**, gut and amended on January 5, 2026, removes the requirement of possessing a high school diploma or equivalent degree from the requirements necessary for an applicant to receive peer support specialist certification.

DMH Analysis: The Department is in the process of analyzing the impacts of this bill on DMH programs.

DMH Position: No position taken yet.

County Position: No position taken yet.

CBHDA Position: Sponsor.

Current Status: The bill passed out of Assembly and ordered to the Senate.

- **AB 1540 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: LGBTQ+ Youth (Gonzalez)**, introduced on January 5, 2026, ensures that technology enabling transfers between 988 centers and a subnetwork of LGBTQ+ specialized youth suicide prevention service providers is available statewide. Callers may dial 988 and press “3” to be automatically routed to an LGBTQ+ suicide prevention specialist.

DMH Analysis: The Department is in the process of analyzing the impacts of this bill on DMH programs.

DMH Position: No position taken yet.

County Position: No position taken yet.

CBHDA Position: Support.

Current Status: The bill will be heard in Assembly Health committee on March 17, 2026.

- **AB 1660 Public Guardians and Public Administrators (Schiavo)**, introduced on January 29, 2026, allows court to impose fines of no less than \$1,000 per violation of a financial institution, government or private agency, retirement fund administrator, insurance company, licensed securities dealer, or other person who fail to comply with lawful requests for information and property.

DMH Analysis: The Department is in the process of analyzing the impacts of this bill on DMH operations.

DMH Position: No position taken yet.

County Position: No position taken yet.

CBHDA Position: Support.

Current Status: The bill will be heard in Assembly Judiciary committee on March 10, 2026.

- **AB 2275 Mental Health Diversion (Bains)**, introduced on February 19, 2026, revises the eligibility requirement by prohibiting the court from finding the defendant eligible solely based on the defendant’s diagnosis of a mental disorder and would additionally require the court to find that the defendant is not mentally incompetent.

DMH Analysis: The Department is in the process of analyzing the impacts of this bill on DMH operations.

DMH Position: No position taken yet.

County Position: No position taken yet.

CBHDA Position: No position taken yet.

Current Status: Awaiting to be referred to committee.

- **[AB 2704 Children and youth behavioral health: services \(Addis\)](#)**, introduced on February 20, 2026, increase access to behavioral health services for children and youth 25 years of age and younger.

DMH Analysis: The Department is in the process of analyzing the impacts of this bill on DMH operations.

DMH Position: No position taken yet.

County Position: No position taken yet.

CBHDA Position: No position taken yet.

Current Status: Awaiting to be referred to committee.