



**COUNTY OF
SAN BERNARDINO**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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February 25, 2009

The Honorable Dave Cox
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **SB 152 (Cox)** - As Introduced 2/12/09 - **SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Cox:

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is pleased to support SB 152. (Cox). This legislation would require the state Department of Mental Health (DMH) to reimburse counties for Medi-Cal claims, for services they have already provided and paid for under the Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Managed Care program, within 90 days of submitting the approved claims.

As you know, California's Counties serve as the managed care plans for the Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health program for all eligible beneficiaries, including Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) services for children and youth.

EPSDT is a federally mandated program that requires states to provide to Medicaid (Medi-Cal) recipients under age 21 any health or mental health service that is medically necessary. Mental health services provided under EPSDT have been delegated to be the responsibility of the Department of Mental Health (DMH). DMH in turn contracts with county mental health plans (MHPs) for the management and delivery of specialty mental health services to eligible children and adults.

It has become commonplace for county Medi-Cal mental health claims to be held in DMH for 90 days or longer. A large number of claims have been held for more than a year. This bill is intended to ensure expedient payment of county Medi-Cal mental health claims by requiring DMH to pay accrued interest on claims that are paid more than 90 days after the department has received them. SB 152 will relieve counties of cash flow difficulties and reductions in the level of services associated with overdue Medi-Cal mental health claims. If counties are forced to cut or stifle mental health services because of slow and/or delinquent reimbursement by DMH, the counties will be faced with increased hospital emergency visits, homelessness, and incarcerations caused by untreated mental illness.

For these reasons, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is in support of SB 152. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lance Larson, the County's Director of Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821. The Board thanks you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

GARY C. OVITT
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

The mission of the government of the County of San Bernardino is to satisfy its customers by providing service that promotes the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of its residents according to the County Charter, general laws, and the will of the people it serves.