

altered the core concept of peer providers. That's according to Adrienne Shilton of the Steinberg Institute, a nonprofit founded by Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg (a former state legislator) that advocates for public policies to improve mental health. The institute co-sponsored SB 10, which so far has passed through committees without dissent.

"From both a policy and fiscal perspective, it just makes sense," Shilton said by phone. "Peer providers are part of our workforce now but aren't utilized to their maximum capacity. The training programs vary widely across the counties and the nonprofits that train them—there really isn't a standard, core set of skills that peers have. So there's an issue to bring parity across the state, and there's the fiscal issue ... that we're actually leaving federal money on the table by not billing for these services."

Proponents say this could ease the burden on a mental health system that's already overwhelmed.

Said Peterson: "In all reality, I'm surprised the bill hasn't passed

Track the bill:
Visit tinyurl.com/SB10status to follow the progress of Senate Bill 10.

before."

A spokesman from the Department of Health Care Services told the CN&R by email that it's "still analyzing SB 10 and does not currently have a position on the bill." He did not comment on the earlier legislation.

Zinman, from CAMHPRO, said SB 10 has provisions that account for current providers' experience when they seek certification. She cited as a benefit "portability"—having a license recognized beyond where the provider received training. Peterson agreed, mentioning the U.S. Veterans' Administration, in which peer providers can transfer nationwide.

Moreover, Peterson added, SB 10 "invites Californians to continue discussion if the certification process is working and what changes need to be done—allows it to grow and evolve as our understanding of peer services evolve." □

WEEKLY DOSE



Sunscreen gets burned

It's the season for restocking the sunscreen supply, but which brand can you trust to do the job? The Environmental Working Group analyzes more than 1,300 products with SPF each year, and the early numbers for its annual report aren't looking too good—nearly two-thirds of the sunscreens evaluated would not pass U.S. Food and Drug Administration safety tests. It wasn't until recently that sunscreen ingredients were regulated, but in February the FDA called for additional testing of a dozen common ingredients after finding that some of them can enter and remain in a person's bloodstream for at least 24 hours. Oxybenzone, for one, has been linked to low testosterone levels and damaged coral reefs. And, as for those sunscreens with an SPF in the triple digits, the FDA is looking to put a cap at 60, since there is no data to prove that anything higher increases protection. Check ewg.org/sunscreen for the updated list.



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