



CWDA
Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of All Californians

925 L Street, Suite 350
Sacramento, CA 95814
p: 916.443.1749 | f: 916.443.3202
cwda.org

March 1, 2022

The Honorable Marc Berman
Assembly Member, State of California
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Berman:

**RE: AB 2259 (BERMAN) AS INTRODUCED
FEBRUARY 16, 2022 – SPONSOR**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) is proud to be the SPONSOR of AB 2259, which establishes a grant program to serve foster youth with substance use needs.

There is an ongoing crisis of substance use among foster youth. Foster youth begin using substances earlier and at a greater rate than non-foster youth: research indicates that youth that have been in the foster care system are five times more likely to abuse drugs than their peers. Studies show that over a quarter of foster youth aged 17 have been referred for substance abuse treatment.

Despite the high rate of foster youth with substance use disorders, there are limited resources in the state that can meet the particular needs of this population. Currently, foster youth are usually referred to outpatient facilities serving the general public. Treatment offered at these facilities is not specifically designed to treat foster youth, who are more likely to have experienced other forms of trauma in addition to struggling with drug use. Removing foster youth from a stable family-setting can make positive outcomes harder to achieve for the youth.

AB 2259 requires the State Department of Social Services (DSS), in collaboration with the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), to establish a grant program to fund the development and implementation of evidence-based models and promising practices to serve foster youth with substance use disorders who are residing in family-based settings. Effective models such as the Adolescent Community Substance Approach and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy combine substance use and mental health therapies to also address the trauma experienced by foster youth. This bill will fill current gaps in treating foster youth for substance use and thereby improve outcomes for foster youth.

For these reasons, CWDA is proud to be the SPONSOR of AB 2259.

Sincerely,

Cathy Senderling-McDonald | Executive Director