

June 14, 2017

The Honorable Jim Wood
Capitol Office, Room 6005
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: AB 710 (Wood) – Department of Consumer Affairs: Boards: Meetings – OPPOSE

Dear Assembly Member Jim Wood:

At its April 21, 2017 meeting, the Board of Psychology (Board) adopted an **Oppose** position on AB 710 (Wood). This bill would require every Board within the Department of Consumer Affairs to conduct one (1) Board meeting in a rural California location every other calendar year.

Current law mandates each Board hold three (3) Board Meetings per calendar year, with one located in southern California, and one in northern California. Currently, the Board holds four (4) meetings per year, which are held in the following regions: Sacramento, Greater Bay Area, Greater Los Angeles Area, and Greater San Diego Area. These locations are chosen to maximize accessibility and participation for both the consumers of psychological services and the Board's licensees, increase the public's accessibility to the Board during these meetings, and expand the Board's understanding of licensee and consumer needs. Additionally, the Board provides live webcasting of Board Meetings and also makes these recorded webcasts available on its website for the public and licensees to access.

The Board has several significant concerns with AB 710, including the potential negative impact on public and licensee participation in Board meetings, the lack of a clear definition of "rural California", and additional costs to the Board, Attorney General staff, Administrative Law Judges, and probationers. Currently, the majority of the Board's licensee population, as well as the consumer population it serves, are located in the larger metropolitan geographic locations in which the Board holds its meetings. These locations are also more easily accessible due to greater commercial and public transportation and lodging options that rural locations often lack. The Board believes this bill is short-sighted in requiring meetings to be held in areas of the state that do not maximize the ability of the majority of the Board's licensees and consumers to attend and participate in Board meetings. This could simultaneously reduce participation by the public and licensees. Additionally, the bill does not define what qualifies as "rural California"; would there be a specific population size or density requirement that the Board would have to use in determining potential locations? Likewise, a population size/density ceiling could lead to even more difficulty finding appropriate meeting spaces in publicly accessible locations within the State's contracting and price restrictions.

Another significant concern for the Board is the bill's potential to significantly increase costs for Board Meetings and petition hearings that are required to be held at public Board meetings. This bill would require additional travel costs for staff and the public. For example, the average cost of flights from Los Angeles to Eureka, CA is over \$400, which is nearly \$250 higher than the average cost of flying from Los Angeles to Sacramento. Using the Board's current Membership composition, this would require increased costs of \$1,000 in airfare alone, not including the additional mileage costs for the Board's two Sacramento-based Board Members and staff to travel to a location like Eureka. Additionally, this would not cover any additional costs for shuttles, rental cars, or mileage reimbursement if the definition of rural required further travel from an airport or airline travel was unavailable in that location. This bill would also require potentially higher costs for a rural board meeting due to the scarcity of hotels that have

Page 2

AB 710: OPPOSE

May 23, 2017

appropriate meeting space capacity to host a Board Meeting with live webcasting, and enough rooms for Board Members, staff, and any other meeting attendees. These increased travel costs would also apply to petition hearings that must be heard at public Board Meetings. Currently, licensees petitioning for reinstatement or early termination of probation must have their hearings at public Board meetings, which would require these licensees, the Attorney General's staff representing the Board, a court reporter, and the Administrative Law Judge to also travel to these rural locations even if the licensee is located in a major metropolitan area, which is the most likely scenario. This would add additional costs to these hearings for the Board, the Attorney General's Office, and the licensee.

While the Board is more than willing to look at additional avenues to increase meaningful opportunities for public participation in Board meetings for rural Californians, and to reach out to additional geographic localities to hold Board meetings in closer proximity to California's rural communities, the mandate in AB 710 is not the answer. The Board believes that AB 710 as written, is poorly defined, administratively burdensome, unnecessarily costly, and could simultaneously reduce participation by both the public and licensees.

The Board's mission is to advance quality psychological services for Californians by ensuring ethical and legal practice and supporting the evolution of the profession.

For the reasons stated above, the Board asks for your **"No"** vote when AB 710 is heard in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Board's Executive Officer, Antonette Sorrick, at (916) 574-7113. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SC Phillips', written in a cursive style.

STEPHEN C. PHILLIPS, JD, PsyD
President, Board of Psychology