



MEMORANDUM

DATE	October 20, 2014
TO	Psychology Board Members
FROM	Jonathan Burke Administrative Services Coordinator
SUBJECT	AB 2198 (Levine): Mental Health Professionals and Suicide Prevention Training

Background:

Requires a psychologist to complete a minimum of 15 contact hours of coursework in suicide assessment, treatment, and management before he or she may be issued a license. This bill also requires six hours of continuing education (CE) in suicide assessment if currently licensed by the Board.

The Board is aware that suicide is an extremely important topic that has touched the lives of many families in our State. The Board is committed to educating our licensees and the general public on this issue via various outreach and educational tools. The Board does not believe, however, that AB 2198 is the appropriate vehicle for achieving competence in this area.

- The coursework and CE hours mandated in the bill will not help a licensee achieve competency in the area of suicide assessment, prevention, and training. The Board is concerned that attending a six-hour course may provide a false sense of subject area mastery to a licensee.
- Suicide assessment, prevention, and training are currently integrated into the curriculum of most graduate training programs. Additionally, suicide assessment is a knowledge point tested in both the national and State examinations (Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP), California Psychology Supplemental Examination (CPSE), California Psychology Law and Ethics Examination (CPLEE)).
- The Board is opposed to CE courses being mandated by the legislature when the Board is better positioned to determine what areas of study will further the professional development of its licensees.

The Board voted at the June Board meeting to take an “Oppose” position. The Board has concerns that while well intentioned, this bill will not achieve the intended goals of increasing competence in the important area of suicide prevention, assessment, and training.

The bill was vetoed by Governor Brown on September 18th, 2014. In the veto message the Governor commented that there is already an extensive regulatory scheme in place for ensuring the professional competence of psychologists and that the Board should determine what actions are needed.

Attachment A is the veto message issued by Governor Brown.

Action Requested:

This item is for informational purposes only.