



August 28, 2018

Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
California State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE:? AB 2983 (Arambula) Health Care Facilities: Voluntary Psychiatric Care
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Governor Brown,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports AB 2983 (Arambula) to prohibit a general acute care hospital or an acute psychiatric hospital from requiring a person who voluntarily seeks care to be in custody as a danger to himself or herself or others or gravely disabled as a condition of accepting a transfer of that person.

According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, an estimated one in eight emergency room visits involves a mental health and/or substance use condition.¹ That number continues to rise even though not all facilities have the psychiatric services needed. In these cases, patients must be transferred to another more appropriate facility. According to a survey of Emergency Physicians in California, nearly all California hospitals require patients be placed on a 5150 hold, a mechanism to force treatment of those who are a danger to themselves or others, before they will accept the transfer of that patient even if the patient is seeking help voluntarily.

Forcing patients who seek voluntary mental health care to be put on an involuntary mandatory hold is a violation of their civil liberties and creates unnecessary barriers to seeking care. It is not a part of existing law.

AB 2983 (Arambula) would stop the practice of demanding patients being transferred to receive mental health care being placed on an involuntary hold before accepting transfer of that patient.

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide respectfully request you to sign AB 2983 (Arambula) into law. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a final horizontal stroke.

Melissa Ruiz, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Executive Board Member, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: The Honorable Ed Hernandez, Author; AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne

1 <https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/apa-blog/2016/11/emergency-room-visits-for-mental-health-conditions-expect-long-waits>