

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Dr. Jim Wood
Chair, Assembly Committee on Health
State Capitol, Room 6005
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2112 (Ramos) Office of Suicide Prevention - SUPPORT

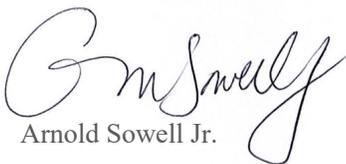
Dear Chair Wood,

NextGen California respectfully requests your support of AB 2112 (Ramos), which will create a state Office of Suicide Prevention within the Department of Public Health.

Over the last several years, the Governor and the Legislature have prioritized expanding California's mental health system and taken significant steps to improve outreach about and access to mental health services. The creation of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC), an independent state agency established by Proposition 63, has also helped to focus more attention on the need for more mental health treatment services. Nevertheless, the rate and risk of suicide and self-harm in our state remains alarming and of significant concern. Suicide risk is especially acute among adolescents, older adults, veterans, and the LGBTQ community.

Although more resources have been allocated to address the crisis of suicide, coordination and targeting of state resources has remained a challenge. In their 2019 strategic plan for suicide prevention, the MHSOAC made a series of recommendations to improve California's suicide prevention policies and programs. One of the Commission's specific recommendations was to create a state Office of Suicide Prevention. This Office will advocate for implementing best practices, help coordinate mental health resources, and measure specific outcomes to strategically improve the way our state addresses the crisis of suicide.

NextGen California has long supported policies and programs that improve access to healthcare and mental health treatment and services. For the above reasons, we respectfully request your "Aye" vote on AB 2112.



Arnold Sowell Jr.
Executive Director, NextGen California