

Unfavorable Statement SB891

Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations – Perinatal Mental Health Conditions
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As a retired registered nurse and mother of 4, I strongly oppose SB891.

SB891 seeks to force mental health evaluations on pregnant women and force mental health certificates on healthcare professionals. This takes away choice from the pregnant woman for pursuing mental health care. It also forces healthcare professionals to seek education, licensure or certificates outside of their chosen scope of practice.

When women see their Obstetrician, it is for the purpose of assuring a health pregnancy for the mother and her baby. The physician may ask questions pursuant to her state of mind during the pregnancy. As necessary, the physician can offer information for mental healthcare. Asking questions and giving referrals for mental health at every visit seems to force a mental health diagnosis.

Pregnant women should always have the choice of pursuing mental health care or not pursuing mental health care. They should not be coerced into mental health care by perpetual referrals.

Likewise, the mental health field is not an Oprah giveaway where you force everyone to receive some type of mental health care certification or licensure. This bill equates a person with a certificate or some type of mini-license with people who have a medical degree or doctoral degree. Allowing anyone with this very limited mental health education to question and diagnosis is an abuse of healthcare and medical quackery.

I urge every member of the committee respect the autonomy of pregnant women to choose their healthcare. **I strongly recommend an unfavorable report for SB891.**