



### **SUMMARY**

AB 680 will require that emergency dispatcher training requirements, be increased to include mental health identification and crisis intervention training. This bill will improve the quality of information provided by dispatchers to peace officers for emergencies involving persons with a mental illness, intellectual disabilities, or substance abuse disorders.

### **BACKGROUND**

Existing law requires that peace officers receive at least 15 hours of mental health training in their basic training course, with an additional continuing training course of at least three hours. These standards were established by SB 11 (Beall, Chapter 468, Statutes of 2015). AB 680 seeks to extend the same general requirements to police dispatchers. Training should focus on identifying emergency calls that involve persons living with a mental health condition, intellectual disabilities, or substance abuse disorders. The goal is to improve the quality of information provided by dispatchers to reduce the amount of people living with mental illness conditions and decriminalize mental illness by enhancing access to care. Collaboratively improved dispatcher training and disbursement of information can improve the safety of all people involved, including the individual in crisis, family members, first responders, and bystanders.

### **PROBLEM**

Law enforcement is often the first responder when a person with a mental illness experiences a crisis. Peace officers rely upon dispatch information to improve early identification of such instances. According to a 2014 report by the California Highway Patrol to the California Senate, 16 percent of officer-involved shootings from 2011-2014 involved people with mental illness diagnoses or strong indications of mental illness. Research shows, at least 20% of adults who are incarcerated have a recent history of mental illness, and more than half of Americans with a mental health condition go untreated. Individuals living with mental illness are over represented in the criminal justice system, which cannot provide appropriate treatment and services. Without proper training, we have seen too many instances of harm to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis when interacting with law enforcement. AB 680 seeks to reduce unnecessary harm and incarceration of individuals living with serious mental illness by improving the information collected by dispatchers and relayed to peace officers with respect to mental illness and intellectual disabilities.

### **SOLUTION**

- AB 680 specifies that evidence-based mental health identification and crisis intervention training be added to the dispatcher basic academy curriculum and continuing training.
- At the local level where Crisis Intervention Training is provided to law enforcement, NAMI members report positive interactions and better outcomes for loved ones.
- Community partnership is an essential component of law enforcement training – both for the training itself and for the continued success of law enforcement interactions with individuals living with mental illness. There will be a concurrent budget request to provide resources for this training.

### **SPONSOR**

National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) California

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