

ISSUE 4: AB 340 ADVISORY WORKING GROUP FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**PANELISTS**

- **John Bauters**, Director of Government Relations, Californians for Safety and Justice, and Chair of the AB 340 Advisory Working Group
- **Jennifer Kent**, Director, Department of Health Care Services

Public Comment**BACKGROUND**

AB 340 (Arambula, Chapter 700, Statutes of 2017) requires DHCS, in consultation with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and others, to convene, by May 1, 2018, an advisory working group to update, amend, or develop, if appropriate, tools and protocols for screening children for trauma, as defined, within the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit. AB 340 requires the working group to report its findings and recommendations to DHCS and to the Legislative Budget Subcommittees on health and human services no later than May 1, 2019.

The purpose of this item on the agenda is for the advisory working group to report its findings recommendations, as required by AB 340. The advisory working group recommends that Medi-Cal providers be given the following three options for screening pediatric populations (children and youth under the age of 21) for exposure to trauma:

1. Utilize the Bay Area Research Consortium on Toxic Stress and Health (BARC) screening tool, called PEARLS, alongside the existing state-required Staying Healthy Assessment (SHA), Bright Futures, or another state-approved Individual Health Education Behavior Assessment (IHEBA) to improve screening for trauma in children, and examine formal integration of this tool within the SHA.
2. Use the Whole Child Assessment (WCA), an existing state-approved IHEBA that incorporates screening for exposure to trauma along with required elements of the SHA.
3. Request approval from DHCS to use an alternative tool to screen for trauma that includes, at a minimum, all of the items contained in the PEARLS tool.

The workgroup proposes a two-step process for improving trauma screenings:

1. First, DHCS include the PEARLS tool as a complementary screening component along with the existing SHA, Bright Futures, or another approved IHEBA to improve trauma-screening practices immediately.
2. Second, DHCS explore if the SHA should be amended to incorporate the PEARLS tool questions into a single assessment tool.

The working group also recommends:

- If the PEARLS tool is incorporated into the SHA, any future version of the SHA include trauma-screening questions that have been evaluated for both biometric and psychometric properties.
- DHCS consider compliance monitoring through the use of a designated CPT code, coupled with provider training.
- To the extent the Whole Child Assessment remains an approved IHEBA, DHCS retain it as an available option for providers to use as an alternative to SHA + PEARLS.

Finally, the working group encourages the Legislature to explore systems that support trauma screening for adults in the future.

STAFF COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

The Subcommittee requests the panel to report on the findings and recommendations of the advisory working group and describe how these recommendations might guide the use of the funding for trauma screening included in the Governor's budget.

Staff Recommendation: Subcommittee staff recommends no action at this time as this is an informational item.
