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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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## **AB 375 (Nguyen) - Medical Practice Act: health care providers: qualified autism service paraprofessionals**

**Version:** June 1, 2026

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** June 22, 2026

**Policy Vote:** B., P. & E.D. 10 - 0

**Mandate:** Yes

**Consultant:** Janelle Miyashiro

**Bill Summary:** AB 375 revises the definition of “health care provider” in the Medical Practice Act to include qualified autism service (QAS) paraprofessionals.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

- Unknown, potentially significant ongoing expenditure increases, ranging from the hundreds of thousands to low millions of dollars, for regional centers overseen by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) (General Fund and other funds).
- No costs to the Medical Board of California, Osteopathic Medical Board of California, or California Department of Insurance.

**Background:** *Behavioral Health Therapy (BHT) Coverage.* SB 946 (Steinberg, Chapter 650, Statutes of 2011) requires healthcare service plans and insurers to cover BHT for individuals with autism or pervasive developmental disorders. SB 946 defined BHT and other behavior intervention programs and established the requirements for individuals providing these services, specifically: QAS providers, QAS professionals (supervised by a QAS provider), and QAS paraprofessionals (supervised by a provider or professional).

*Role and Qualifications of QAS Paraprofessionals.* QAS paraprofessionals are unlicensed and uncertified individuals who operate under strict oversight. They must be employed by a QAS provider or associated entity, deliver services under the supervision of a QAS provider or professional, and implement treatments pursuant to a treatment plan developed and approved by a QAS provider.

To qualify as a QAS paraprofessional, an individual must have at least six months of experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities and meet one of the following educational criteria:

- Possess a high school diploma or equivalent and complete 30 hours of competency-based training designed by a QAS provider.
- Hold an associate degree in a human, social, or educational services discipline.
- Hold a degree or certification related to behavioral management from an accredited community college or other educational institution.

*BHT Telehealth Coverage.* AB 744 (Aguiar-Curry, Chapter 867, Statutes of 2019) requires healthcare service plans and insurers to cover telehealth services provided by a healthcare provider in the same manner as in-person services. While QAS providers and professionals are defined as “health care providers” in statute, QAS paraprofessionals are not.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Executive Order N-43-2 temporarily required healthcare insurers and plans to cover BHT delivered via telehealth services by QAS paraprofessionals. However, following the expiration of the state of emergency, telehealth services for BHT provided by QAS paraprofessionals are no longer required to be covered.

**Proposed Law:** Adds QAS paraprofessionals in the definition of “health care provider.”

**Related Legislation:** AB 2246 (Ramos, 2024) would have also added QAS paraprofessionals in the definition of “health care provider” in the Medical Practice Act. AB 2246 was held on the Suspense File in this committee.

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