

---

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

---

### **AB 489 (Bonta) - Health care professions: deceptive terms or letters: artificial intelligence**

**Version:** July 8, 2025

**Policy Vote:** B., P. & E.D. 10 - 0, JUD. 13  
- 0

**Urgency:** No

**Mandate:** Yes

**Hearing Date:** August 18, 2025

**Consultant:** Janelle Miyashiro

**Bill Summary:** AB 489 prohibits artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI (GenAI) systems, programs, devices, or similar technology from misrepresenting themselves as licensed or certified healthcare professionals and provides that developers and deployers of these systems are subject to the regulatory authority of state healthcare licensing boards and enforcement agencies.

**Fiscal Impact:** The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) reports a majority of the healing arts boards note a minor and absorbable fiscal impact, as many currently have enforcement processes in place and would treat AI or GenAI related complaints similarly to other unlicensed activity concerns. DCA also notes the following:

- Unknown, potentially significant increase in enforcement workload to the Medical Board of California, Physical Therapy Board, Board of Registered Nursing, and the Board of Naturopathic Medicine to address an anticipated increase in complaints (various special funds). Actual fiscal impact to these boards will depend on the volume of complaints received concerning AI or GenAI and the extent workload can be absorbed within existing enforcement processes.
- Ongoing costs of approximately \$56,000 for additional enforcement workload to the Dental Board of California (DBC) (State Dentistry Fund). DBC anticipates these costs to be absorbable within existing resources.
- Ongoing costs of approximately \$56,000 for additional enforcement workload to the Board of Pharmacy (BOP) (Pharmacy Board Contingent Fund). BOP anticipates these costs to be absorbable within existing resources

**Background:** AI-enabled systems and chatbots posing as health professionals have sprouted up across the internet, raising serious consumer and public health concerns. While certain AI systems may be trained on legitimate medical sources, unlike licensed healthcare providers who undergo years of rigorous training, AI systems lack the nuanced clinical judgment needed to properly assess symptoms, consider individual patient history, and account for complex interactions between conditions. When these systems present themselves as medical authorities, users may receive inaccurate diagnoses, inappropriate treatment recommendations, or dangerous advice about medication interactions. These systems are especially concerning when used by certain vulnerable groups that may be more likely to trust authoritative-sounding medical advice, especially those with limited healthcare access or health or technology literacy. While there are certainly legitimate AI applications in healthcare, AI systems that misrepresent their capabilities and credentials put users at risk and deceive consumers into thinking a product, service, or information is something it is not.

**Proposed Law:**

- Provides that indicated provisions of law that prohibit the use of specified terms, letters, or phrases to indicate or imply possession of a license or certificate to practice a health care profession, without at that time having the appropriate license or certificate required for that practice or profession, shall be enforceable against a person or entity who develops or deploys a system or device that uses one or more of those terms, letters, or phrases in the advertising or functionality of an AI or GenAI system, program, device, or similar technology.
- Prohibits the use of a term, letter, or phrase in the advertising or functionality of an AI or GenAI system, program, device, or similar technology that indicates or implies that the care, advice, reports, or assessments being offered through the AI or GenAI technology is being provided by a natural person in possession of the appropriate license or certificate to practice as a health care professional. Each use of a prohibited term, letter, or phrase shall constitute a separate violation.
- Provides that a violation of the provisions of this bill is subject to the jurisdiction of the appropriate health care professional licensing board or enforcement agency.
- Authorizes the appropriate health care professional licensing board to pursue an injunction or restraining order to enforce the provisions of this bill.
- Provides that each use of a prohibited term, letter, or phrase constitutes a separate violation of the provisions of this bill.

**-- END --**