

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 993 (Ochoa Bogh) – As Amended April 8, 2026

Policy Committee: Business and Professions

Vote: 19 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes the employer of a Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) licensee or registrant to withhold that licensee's or registrant's name and license or registration information from clients in acute psychiatric hospitals or correctional settings.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Authorizes an employing entity or agency of a BBS licensee or registrant to exercise discretion regarding inclusion of any or all the information required in the notice the licensee or registrant must present to a client prior to initiating psychotherapy services, based on safety concerns, if (a) the setting has a process by which the client may obtain sufficient information to file a complaint with the BBS, (b) the process is disclosed to the client as part of the notice, and (c) a copy of the notice is preserved in the client's record.
- 2) Specifies the following practice settings in which the above provision is applicable:
 - a) An acute psychiatric hospital.
 - b) A correctional treatment center.
 - c) Any setting where mental health services are provided to incarcerated individuals under the jurisdiction of a local, state, or federal correctional authority, including, but not limited to, a state prison, county jail, juvenile detention facility, or other correctional setting operated by, or under contract with, a governmental entity.
- 3) Requires, if the employing entity or agency exercises the discretion authorized in item 1, above, the licensee or registrant to be responsible for ensuring the process in item 1a, above, is in place.

FISCAL EFFECT:

The BBS anticipates minor and absorbable costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) California, AFL-CIO. According to the author:

[This bill] will address serious safety concerns facing mental health professionals working in correctional facilities, acute psychiatric hospitals, and other high-risk settings. Under current law, providers are required to share detailed identifying information with clients prior to delivering services. While it's important for transparency and accountability, the fails to protect licensees who are dealt with the realities of working with incarcerated and high-risk populations, where disclosing this information can expose providers and potentially their families to harassment, threats, or harm. [This bill] offers a balanced solution for these mental health providers by limiting identifying information but still ensuring patients have a clear and accessible process to request the information necessary to file a complaint with the appropriate licensing board. This bill will restore longstanding protections for mental health professionals ensuring that both the incarcerated population and providers are working in the safest environment possible.

- 2) **Background.** The BBS licenses, examines, and enforces professional standards for licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFTs), licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs), licensed professional clinical counselors (LPCCs), licensed and educational psychologists (LEPs), as well as registered associate marriage and family therapists (AMFTs), associate clinical social workers (ASWs), and associate professional clinical counselors (APCCs). Associates have completed the educational requirements for licensure and are in the process of obtaining supervised experience. BBS is responsible for regulatory oversight of more than 148,000 licensees and registrants.

SB 1024 (Ochoa Bogh), Chapter 160, Statutes of 2024, changed an existing notice requirement to apply when licensees meet with clients in person and required licensees and registrants to include their name and license or registration information in a notice to clients. The proponents of this bill report that since that requirement took effect, therapists have been stalked, harassed, and made to feel unsafe after providing services to incarcerated individuals. This bill would allow employers to withhold a therapist's or LEP's name and license or registration information from a client in certain settings.

- 3) **Policy Concerns.** As noted in the Assembly Business and Professions Committee analysis, a client may request a therapist's name to file a complaint with the BBS and access other information about the therapist, including their address, on the BBS's website. The bill also authorizes a therapist's employer to exercise discretion in providing information about a therapist in the client notice, but it is the therapist's statutory responsibility to provide the client notice. Further, this bill makes it the therapist's responsibility to ensure that a facility has a process to allow a client to request the therapist's identifying information, when information about the process is already required in the alternative client notice, and the process is arguably the facility's responsibility.