

# KATIE ★ PORTER

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Dear Ms. Everroad and Dr. Davidoff:

Access to quality mental healthcare is a major concern for our constituents and people across the State of California. As elected officials, we have made mental healthcare access and industry oversight among our top policy priorities. We are troubled to learn that the Southern California Permanente Medical Group (SCPMG) is planning to proceed with significant reductions in the amount of time that therapists will have to complete vital patient care work, like charting and responding to urgent patient correspondence.

We understand that securing sufficient Patient Management Time (PMT) was among the biggest reasons why Kaiser therapists in Northern California initiated a strike that lasted over two months in 2022. It is alarming to hear that KCPMG is proposing to reduce PMT in Southern California to just two hours per week, especially when therapists already report difficulties in providing sufficient care with current PTM allocations.

This proposed reduction would leave Southern California therapists with significantly less time to perform critical patient care tasks compared to their counterparts in Northern California. Psychologists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and other counselors are already burdened with limited PMT. This proposed reduction would also impede their professional integrity and ability to sufficiently address patients' mental health. In addition, we've heard serious concerns that the proposed PMT reduction will result in therapists departing SCPMG, leaving patients waiting even longer for much needed care.

In addition to the concerns over proposed PMT reductions, we have received several reports that Kaiser Permanente is not in compliance with California's SB 221. This landmark law requires insurers to provide follow-up mental health therapy sessions within 10 business days of a prior appointment, unless the patient's therapist determines that a longer wait would not be detrimental. Reports suggest that managers do not have control over their schedules and that therapists are being asked to backdate appointments to be in compliance with this new law, which makes it difficult for therapists to advocate for their patients to receive the timely care to which they are legally entitled.

SCPMG is among the largest private providers of mental healthcare in Southern California, and these issues raise credible concerns as to the quality and legality of the services being provided. The most sustainable approach to providing excellent healthcare and complying with SB 221 is to increase staffing

rather than reducing PMT, which would have detrimental effects on quality of care and therapist retention. We believe SCPMG can and should help lead the way on improving mental healthcare. We strongly encourage you to consider following the lead of your counterparts in Northern California by expanding PMT and responding to therapist concerns by increasing staffing, which will result in improved mental healthcare for KCPMG members. Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this matter.

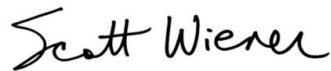
Sincerely,



Katie Porter  
Member of Congress



Josh Newman  
California Senator, 29<sup>th</sup> District



Scott Wiener  
California Senator, 11<sup>th</sup> District