



## ASSEMBLYMEMBER BEN HUESO, 80<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

### AB 1278 – Integrative Cancer Treatment

#### Summary

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AB 1278 provides open access for consumers to receive, and physicians to administer, Integrative Cancer Treatment in California.

#### Background

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Integrative cancer treatment is a multidisciplinary treatment plan that brings together traditional tools for fighting cancer with complementary and alternative therapies. Treatment includes, but is not limited to, nutritional support, naturopathic medicine, homeopathic medicine, mind-body medicine, oncology rehabilitation, pain management, chiropractic care, and spiritual support. In addition, treatment incorporates uses of unconventional medicines that have proven results. For example, research has shown anti-cancer powers in Vitamin C and other natural vitamins and herbs. Some studies have shown how a compound in red grapes may prevent colon cancer and how cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage contain a cancer preventing elements.

Integrative cancer treatment not only gives consumers options for care, it also helps patients cope with the common side effects of chemotherapy and radiation, which include muscle tension, aches, pains, nausea, vomiting, and fatigue. Unfortunately, the side effects associated with conventional therapies often cause patients to end their treatments prematurely, or require that doctors take a less aggressive approach. This occurrence decreases with the addition of integrative oncology services.

Furthermore, accessibility to integrative cancer treatment provides a bridge in communication for patients and doctors. According to a press release out of UC Irvine, eighty percent of cancer patients use some form of complementary or alternative medicine, and only half of them tell their doctors about it. The internet-era that we now live in contributes to the problem, making it easy for patients to do their own research and self-medicate with alternative treatments that may not be safe. Open access to integrative cancer treatment provides a safer pathway for patients to receive care and seek consult from a licensed health expert

#### Why this bill is needed

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California law currently restricts the use of unconventional remedy in the diagnosis, treatment, alleviation, or cure of cancer. In fact, California is the only state to statutorily restrict cancer therapy exclusively to conventional drugs, surgery, and radiation. Past reports and legislative analysis suggests that current law was established to protect the public from fraudulent, misleading, and potentially harmful therapies. It is extremely important to ensure vulnerable patients are not taken advantage of or misled. However, the stringent and outdated nature of existing statute has prevented Californians from capitalizing on new and innovative cancer therapies. Options for integrative care are limited to travel outside of our state borders or participation in a research program. And while, several academic institutions in the state have already invested in integrative treatments for cancer, such as UCLA, UCSF, Scripps, and Bastyr University, open access for consumers to integrative care is essential. California would benefit by joining the several other states and countries currently offering integrative cancer treatment to patients.

#### AB 1278

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AB 1278 provides cancer patients with more options for care that best suit their needs. Integrative medicine does not replace conventional therapy, rather it is meant to complement it. This bill clarifies the ability of a physician or surgeon to administer or provide integrative cancer treatment in California. In addition, AB 1278 specifies that integrative cancer treatment must meet an evidence-based medical standard, as defined in the bill, and includes language that encourages communication with a patient's oncologist, as well as treatment with conventional therapies.

#### Sponsor

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California Citizens for Health Freedom  
[www.citizenshealth.org](http://www.citizenshealth.org)

#### For More Information Call

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