SEP 18 2022

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 1999 without my signature.

This bill would require the Department of Health Care Services to establish a pilot project in at least six counties to provide funding for targeted outreach to Medi-Cal beneficiaries who are blind or have low vision regarding Medi-Cal-covered behavioral health services.

I agree with the author’s goal of helping people who are experiencing vision loss and the desire to have appropriately targeted behavioral health services. Although the bill proposes a pilot program subject to appropriation, the proposed pilot could cost up to $85 million over a three year period that was not included in the budget.

With our state facing lower-than-expected revenues over the first few months of this fiscal year, it is important to remain disciplined when it comes to spending, particularly spending that is ongoing. We must prioritize existing obligations and priorities, including education, health care, public safety and safety-net programs.

The Legislature sent measures with potential costs of well over $20 billion in one-time spending commitments and more than $10 billion in ongoing commitments not accounted for in the state budget. Bills that create significant General Fund cost pressure, such as this measure, should be considered and
accounted for as part of the annual budget process. For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gavin Newsom