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May 22, 2023

RE: SB 616 - Sick days: paid sick days accrual and use: unpaid sick leave for railroad employees

To Dr. Aragon,

On behalf of the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO), representing the appointed physician health officers of California's 61 city and county jurisdictions, we would like to express our recommendation to **SUPPORT SB 616.**

SB 616 mandates employers to provide a minimum of 56 hour or 7 days of paid sick leave (PSL) by the 280th calendar of employment per year or each 12-month period. The bill cites study of 2009 H1N1 period when 8 million people worked while sick and caused an additional 7 million to get sick and that industry data of food services sector indicate almost half of all foodborne illness outbreaks to be attributable to employees coming to work while sick. The bill also states how COVID-19 paid sick leave policies benefited Californians by decreasing transmissions and that higher wage-earners often have paid sick leave while low-wage earners do not. Lack of paid sick leave for lower-waged CA workers affects communicable disease transmissions as many may continue to work while sick. Promoting enactment of laws that decrease spread of disease is a primary tenet of public health authority. Ensuring paid sick leave benefits for low-wage earners promotes equity for workers. This bill promotes equity for vulnerable populations, decreases transmission, and allows for evidence-based policy that is effective in helping workers stay home when sick.

For these reasons, CCLHO recommends a SUPPORT position for SB 616.

CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), other departments, boards, commissions, and officials of federal, state and local agencies, the Legislature, and other organizations on all matters affecting health. CCLHO membership consists of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions.

Sincerely,

Anissa Davis, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers