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May 17, 2023

RE: AB 85 - Social determinants of health: screening and outreach

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 AB 85.**

Public Health's focus is on addresses the upstream effects of health and this bill will allow for early identification of the social determinations of health so that hopefully Medi-Cal beneficiaries can be linked to services in a timely manner. This bill would require a health care service plan contract or health insurance policy issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2024, to include coverage for screenings for social determinants of health, defined, regardless of the screening method utilized. The bill would require a health care service plan or health insurer to provide physicians who provide primary care services with adequate access to community health workers, peer support specialists, lay health workers, community health representatives, or social workers in counties where the health care service plan or health insurer has enrollees or insureds, as specified. The bill would authorize the respective departments to adopt guidance to implement its provisions. Because a violation of the bill's requirements by a health care service plan would be a crime, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would make social determinants of health screenings a covered benefit for Medi-Cal beneficiaries and would require the State Department of Health Care Services to provide reimbursement for those screenings. The bill would also require that federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics be reimbursed for these services at the Medi-Cal fee-for-service rate.

For these reasons, CCLHO recommends a SUPPORT position for AB 85.

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