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June 4, 2019

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH  
Director and State Public Health Officer  
California Department of Public Health  
1615 Capitol Avenue  
PO Box 997377, MS 0500  
Sacramento, California 95899-7377

**Re: AB 645 (Irwin): Firearms: warning statements.**

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board meeting on May 1, 2019 to take a Support recommendation on AB 645 (Irwin), a bill that under current law requires the packaging of any firearm and any descriptive materials that accompany any firearm sold or transferred in this state, or delivered for sale in this state, by any licensed manufacturer or licensed dealer of firearms, to bear a label containing a warning statement, as specified. This bill would require, as of June 1, 2020, a specified statement regarding suicide prevention to be included on the firearm warning label, and to be posted on the premises of each licensed firearm dealer.

Currently, information on suicide prevention resources is not available at any point in process of obtaining a firearm. The decision to commit suicide is often made in a short timeframe with research showing that an overwhelming majority of individuals who have survived a suicide attempt acted on the ideation within one hour. Suicide prevention labeling, signage, and educational information, as proposed in this measure, is a promising step toward empowering Californians with preventive health and safety information to receive services and support in times of crisis. For these reasons, CCLHO recommends a Support position on AB 645.

CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now California Department of Public Health), 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.

Should you have any questions, please contact me by email at [roidham@placer.ca.gov](mailto:roidham@placer.ca.gov) or by phone at (530) 745-3121. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Oldham, MD, MSHA  
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers