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March 26, 2018

The Honorable Jim Wood  
Chair, Assembly Health Committee  
State Capitol, Room 6005  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: ??A?B 2122 (Reyes) Medi-Cal: Blood lead screening tests**  
**AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Chair Wood,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians statewide, strongly supports AB 2122 (Reyes), which would require the Department of Health Care Services to ensure that a child enrolled in Medi-Cal receives blood lead screening tests at 12 and 24 months of age, and that a child 2 to 6 years of age, inclusive, receives a blood lead screening test if there is no record of a previous test for that child. The bill also requires the department to notify parents and health providers when a Medi-Cal enrolled child misses a required blood lead test.

Toxic lead exposure disproportionately impacts low income communities, and, for many children, will lead to permanent and life-long disabilities if not caught early and treated. African-American children and children living in poverty continue to have higher blood lead concentrations.

Lead exposure has been shown to decrease IQ and to cause behavior difficulties (e.g., inattentive, hyperactive, disorganized). Follow-up studies of children with high lead levels has indicated higher rates of failure to graduate from high school, reading disabilities, and greater absenteeism in the final year of high school.<sup>1</sup>

According to the California Department of Public Health, 88% of lead-poisoned children are enrolled in Medi-Cal. When Medi-Cal children are lead-tested and those exposed to lead are identified, parents and providers can act to minimize the neurotoxin's developmental harms. According to available data, most Medi-Cal children required to receive these two screenings are not tested. As a result, they are at risk of serious developmental problems from toxic lead.

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 across the state urge you to vote AYE on AB 2122 (Reyes). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Melissa J. Ruiz, M.D., M.P.H., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Early Career Physician Representative, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: Assembly Health Committee Members

Office of Honorable Eloise Reyes, California State Assembly (Author)

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