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April 24, 2017

The Honorable Richard Bloom  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0050  
Fax: (916) 319-2150

RE: AB 1601 (Bloom): Hearing aids: minors  
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Bloom:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 1601 (Bloom). This bill would require that health care service plans and insurance policies include coverage for hearing aids for minors, to the extent permitted by federal law.

California, like every other state in the nation, has established an Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program that aims to identify infants with permanent hearing loss by 3 months of age and provide follow-up treatment. This program is essential to swift detection and treatment of hearing loss in children. However, one common obstacle to adequate treatment is that insurance plans do not always adequately cover hearing aids for children, leaving families of limited means unable to access the care they know their child needs.

AB 1601 (Bloom) would remedy this situation by requiring all health care insurance policies and service plans to include coverage for hearing aids for those under 18 years of age, to the extent permitted by federal law. This would help ensure that California children with hearing loss are able to access education, socialize with friends and family members, and go about daily tasks without the impediments associated with untreated permanent hearing loss, which would in turn contribute to a marked improvement in their health and well-being.

Pediatricians strongly support AB 1601 (Bloom). We thank you for your public service and for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of a representative of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California.

Zoey Goore, M.D., M.P.H., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
President, California Chapter 1 of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Executive Board, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne