



April 4, 2018

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

RE: AB 1963 (Waldron): Medi-Cal: reimbursement: opioid addiction treatment
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Chair Wood:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports proposed legislation AB 1963 (Waldron), which would raise Medi-Cal provider reimbursement rates for medication-assisted treatments for opioid addiction.

In 2016, over 42,000 Americans died of opioid overdoses. Over 3,000 of the overdose victims were adolescents or young adults between the ages of 15 and 24, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that for every young person who died of opioid overdoses in 2016, nearly 120 were admitted to the emergency room. Of the remaining victims, many were parents, older siblings, or community members whose deaths affected an untold number of young people. Faced with this devastation, we must make sure that we are taking every step we can to reduce opioid addiction.

AB 1963 (Waldron) would help reduce opioid addiction in California by increasing the Medi-Cal reimbursement rates for medication-assisted treatments for opioid addiction, including buprenorphine/naloxone combination treatment, methadone treatment, and naltrexone treatment, among other options. These treatments are clinically proven to help patients recover from opioid addiction, but according to the AAP policy statement "Medication-Assisted Treatment of Adolescents With Opioid Use Disorders," less than half of treatment centers offer medication treatment for opioid use disorders, even though this medication "can effectively treat a life-threatening condition." As such, the AAP recommends "increasing resources to improve access to medication-assisted treatment," which this bill would effectively do by making sure medical offices are financially able to provide this treatment.

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 across the state strongly support proposed legislation AB 1963 (Waldron) and respectfully urge an AYE vote. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin".

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: Honorable Marie Waldron (Author)
Members of the Assembly Health Committee
AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne