



March 30, 2018

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

RE: AB 2804 (Waldron) Substance use disorder treatment workforce expansion
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Chair Wood,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, supports AB 2804 (Waldron), which would create planning for a 21st Century substance use disorder workforce to address the opioid crisis by requiring a statewide needs assessment for the addiction treatment workforce; outlining incentives for cross training other licensed professionals in mental health and primary care areas; and addressing planning for additional counselors with youth treatment competency.

Expanding and improving California's substance use disorder workforce supports the goal of creating the nation's first "on demand" treatment system for substance use disorder and creates the foundation for California's youth treatment system set to be implemented in 2019.

California employs fewer substance use disorder counselors per population than the national average. There are almost 3.5 million people with diagnosable substance use disorders in California, yet there are less than 20,000 certified substance use disorder treatment counselors.

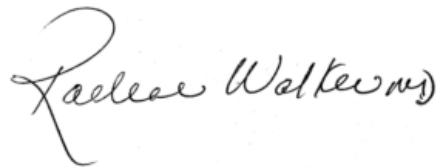
In order to increase access to substance use disorder treatments in California, the state must also increase the number of trained professionals to provide this treatment. Currently, 41% of California's substance use disorder treatment workforce identifies under a "registered" status meaning these providers have not met testing and education requirements to become certified substance use disorder counselors. As registrants, these providers are considered "entry level" employees and may continue to work under the status of a registrant for five years before they are required to become certified.

AB 2804 (Waldron) would state the Legislature's long-range goals through the creation of one-year and five year plans to expand the substance use disorder treatment workforce in California to aid in the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse. The bill would also set out one-year goals for school districts, the California State University system, the University of California, the community college system, and the State Department of Health Care Services.

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 across the state urge you to vote AYE on AB 2804

(Waldron). 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 cursive script that reads "Raelene Walker, M.D." The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Raelene Walker, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Executive Board Member, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

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