



March 28, 2017

The Honorable Brian Maienschein
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 94249
Fax: (916) 319-2177

RE: AB 654 (Maienschein): Pediatric home health care
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Maienschein:

I am writing on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, to let you know that we strongly support your proposed legislation AB 654 (Maienschein). This bill would require the Department of Health Care Services to establish an incentive-based, supplement payment program for home health agencies that treats children who are receiving continuous nursing care or private duty nursing services at home through the Medi-Cal program.

Approximately 4,500 children in the state of California suffer from severe, long term health needs that render them eligible for Medi-Cal in-home nursing care. In-home care saves state money by allowing these children to be discharged from ICU-level hospitals, while also benefiting the children who are able to return to the comforts of home despite their complex health needs. However, home health agencies increasingly do not accept Medi-Cal patients because the reimbursement rate is both lower than what surrounding states pay—despite California’s higher cost of living—and far lower than California’s average commercial rate for in-home health care. This is highly detrimental to these children, who are thus unable to access the care they need.

AB 654 (Maienschein) would help these children access home health care by implementing an incentive program to increase home health agencies’ pay for treating Medi-Cal patients, while also encouraging the Department of Health Care Services to consider an additional supplemental payment program for patients with especially severe conditions. This would make a big difference in the lives of thousands of severely ill children.

Pediatricians across the state support AB 654 (Maienschein). We thank you 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 read "Pat Cantrell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Pat Cantrell, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
President, California Chapter 3 of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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