



April 13, 2018

The Honorable Toni Atkins
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 651-4039

RE: SB 1125 (Atkins) Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and Rural Health Clinic Services
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Senator Atkins,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 1125 (Atkins). This bill would allow patients increased access to mental health services by allowing a primary care visit to occur on the same day as a mental health visit.

FQHCs care for approximately 1.66 million children, consisting > 30% of the Medi-Cal enrollment for children ages 0-21 years in California. These sites improve access to preventative primary care health services for our underserved populations. Integration of primary care, dental, and support services such as nutrition, optometry in community health centers allows children and families to obtain comprehensive care in a patient centered medical home. Currently, approximately 37% of children in need of mental health services are unable to obtain them, with a greater lack of access to mental health care for Children with Special Health Care Needs. This legislation would enable reimbursement for a 2nd visit for mental health services on the same day as another primary care visit, which allows families who often face difficulties with transportation, to receive much needed mental health support during a single day.

My patient Camila is a 2 year old child with speech delay and failure to thrive. Her mother is a victim of domestic violence, and struggles with depression every day. They currently live in different shelters, and mom is unable to coordinate primary care visits and mental health services with her work study schedule, which will ultimately affect Camila's health. Since mom is able to bring her child to every primary care appointment for evaluation of her growth and vaccination, it would be beneficial if we could coordinate therapy for the family on the same day, and ultimately enable the exact supports that this family needs to help break the cycle of poor health outcomes.

Pediatricians across the state support SB 1125 (Atkins). 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 'M Patel', written in a cursive style.

Mona Patel, MD, FAAP
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne