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April 13, 2017

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
State Capitol, Room 4072  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 651-4939

RE: SB 379 (Atkins): Pupil health: oral health assessment  
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Atkins:

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 SB 379 (Atkins). This bill would include “caries experience” among the data required to be reported by schools, permit passive consent for on-site oral health assessment, and encourage schools to report data to a database designed by the California Department of Public Health.

Tooth decay is the number one chronic disease among children, with consequences including persistent pain, trouble eating and sleeping, missed school days, and expensive emergency room visits for preventable dental problems. Children, low-income families and other underserved populations experience disproportionate levels of dental disease in large part due to difficulties accessing early preventive and routine dental care. The implementation of the State Oral Health Plan represents a step forward in California children’s dental health care, but first adequate data must be gathered.

SB 379 (Atkins) would assure that this information is gathered by requiring caries experience data, already gathered by schools, to be reported to the California Department of Public Health’s Office of Oral Health. It would also facilitate school oral health screenings by allowing that they be conducted with passive consent.

Pediatricians across the state strongly support SB 379 (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 "Macy".

Nancy Graff, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

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