

February 14, 2019

The Honorable Richard Pan
Chair of the Senate Committee on Health
State Capitol, Room 2191
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 24 (Leyva) - Public health: public university student health centers: abortion by medication
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Chair Pan,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, supports proposed legislation Senate Bill 24 (Leyva) to increase access to reproductive health services for students at public universities by providing medication abortion on campus at student health centers.

No student health care center at California's public universities currently provides medication abortion services, despite how clinically simple and safe the service is to offer. California ensures adequate funding for the provision of medication abortion through Medi-Cal and requires private insurance to ensure coverage. Yet, students seeking this basic reproductive health care must travel off campus to access abortion care - often with serious logistical and financial barriers. According to recent studies at UCSF, over half (51%) of students across the UC and CSU systems are low-income (defined as qualifying for a Pell Grant). For those students, paying out-of-pocket at a clinic, securing reliable transportation, missing school and work to determine options and getting to a clinic are significant burdens. Moreover, after a student identifies a clinic they wait an average of a week for an appointment at the closest clinic to campus. Delaying abortion due to appointment availability may make a student ineligible for medication abortion, may increase the cost of the procedure, and may increase the risk of side effects or complications.

To ensure California's college students have access to the full range of reproductive health choices, SB 24 (Leyva) would require that beginning January 1, 2023, each public university student health center offer abortion by medication onsite. The bill would establish the College Student Health Center Sexual and Reproductive Health Preparation Fund, administered by the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, to provide private moneys in the form of grants to public university student health centers for medication abortion readiness. A consortium of funders has stepped forward to cover the full preparation costs for implementation on every public university campus in California.

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide strongly support proposed legislation SB 24 (Leyva) and urge you to vote AYE. We thank you for your leadership on behalf of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Melissa Ruiz, MD
Governing Member
State Government Affairs Committee
AAP California

cc: Senate Committee on Health; The Honorable Connie Leyva, Author; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne