



March 18, 2019

Assemblymember Susan Eggman
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

**RE: AB 577 (Eggman): Medi-Cal: maternal mental health.
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Assemblymember Eggman:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 577 to extend Medi-Cal postpartum care for up to one year for those diagnosed with a maternal mental health condition.

Perinatal depression is the most common complication of pregnancy in our country. It can adversely affect the infant's brain development and is a risk factor for parental neglect and abuse, as well as increased costs of medical care, inappropriate medical treatment of the infant, discontinuation of breastfeeding, family dysfunction, and toxic stress.

Studies suggest that as many as 12% of all women who are pregnant or in the postpartum period experience depression in a given year. Adolescent mothers with low income report depressive symptoms at a rate of 40% to 60%.

Evidence shows that only about half of these cases are correctly diagnosed and many diagnosed cases are not properly treated. One contributing factor is that Medi-Cal only provides for treatment for pregnancy-related concerns up to 60 days after the last day of the pregnancy. The form of perinatal depression known as postpartum depression can occur up to a year after birth.

AB 577 would invest in the next generation of Californians at a critical time in their growth and development by extending the window for postpartum Medi-Cal coverage to a full year after the last day of pregnancy, thus improving access to postpartum mental health services for Medi-Cal patients.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support AB 577. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,

Mona Patel, MD

Co-Chair, State Government Affairs
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership