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August 17, 2020

The Honorable Senator Nancy Skinner  
State Capitol, Room 5094  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 33 (Skinner) Electronic Benefits Transfer System**  
**AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Skinner,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 33 as amended on August 4, 2020. This bill would require the State Department of Social Services to gather recommendations about how to prepare the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system to accommodate online purchases.

Food insecurity is a critical health issue that impacts children and families in all communities. Children who live in households that are food insecure are likely to be sick more often, recover from illness more slowly, and be hospitalized more frequently. The evidence is overwhelming that food insecurity has significant impacts on the health and well-being of children and that those impacts can be life-long.

EBT is the automated system that allows CalFresh, CalWorks, and other cash benefit recipients to use a card, much like a debit card, to access their food and cash benefits. As of 2018, 9.4% of households in California were using EBT benefits. The COVID-19 crisis is increasing EBT use, as many people are unemployed or on reduced employment, and children who were previously eligible for free school lunch or breakfast are currently eligible for extra funds for food during school closures (Pandemic EBT). EBT cards, however, cannot be used for any online transactions. Online purchasing can increase access to healthy food for people who live in food deserts, have issues with mobility, or lack of access to transportation. This access is even more crucial during COVID-19 as there are health risks involved in grocery shopping.

At this time, we do not have the needed federal authority for CalFresh beneficiaries to use their benefits to purchase food online. Making sure that California is ready to accommodate online EBT purchases when that authority is given will help get this invaluable service to Californians as soon as possible.

Pediatricians across the state strongly support SB 33. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kris Calvin, CEO  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

Cc: AAP Leadership