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May 11, 2020

Assembly Member Jim Wood, Chair
Assembly Committee on Health
Capitol Office, Room 6005
P.O. Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249-0002

RE: AB 2360 (Maienschein) Maternal and Child Mental Health: Telepsychiatry
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Chair Wood,

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 proposed legislation AB 2360 (Maienschein) as amended on May 7, 2020. This bill would require health care service plans and health insurers to establish a telehealth consultation program that provides providers who treat children and pregnant and postpartum persons with access to a psychiatrist in order to more quickly diagnose and treat children and pregnant and postpartum persons suffering from mental illness.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) approximately 10% of pregnant women and 13% of women who have just given birth experience a mental disorder, usually depression. When left untreated, depression can cause suffering and reduced responses to the needs of newborns. Shame, stigma, lack of time, lack of childcare, and lack of social supports can all be barriers to accessing care for Maternal Mental Health (MMH) disorders. Telehealth can help lessen or in some cases completely remove these barriers. Telepsychiatry can provide easier access to care at less cost, reach people living in rural areas who might not otherwise have access to a clinic, and make it easier for patients with mobility issues to access care.

AB 2360 (Maienschein) would make it easier to more quickly diagnose and treat children and pregnant and postpartum persons suffering from mental illness.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support AB 2360 (Maienschein) and urge you to vote AYE. 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,

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

Kris Calvin, Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California is the state-level advocacy organization of the four AAP California Chapters. Our mission is to promote the health and well-being of all children and youth in California and to support the professional needs of our California Chapter member pediatricians.

We are a 501(c)4 nonprofit legally incorporated in California.