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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 2464 (Aguiar-Curry) Project ECHO (registered trademark) Grant Program
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 AB 2464 (Aguiar-Curry) as amended on May 5, 2020, which would establish the Project ECHO Children's Mental Health Grant Program.

During the SARS pandemic and the H1N1 flu pandemic, nearly one-third of children who were isolated or in quarantine displayed symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), according to the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. The much greater scope of the COVID-19 pandemic means it is highly likely to impact many more children with greater severity.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), "emotional, behavioral, and relationship problems can develop in very young children, especially those living in high-risk families or communities. These early problems interfere with the normative activities of young children and their families and predict long-lasting problems across multiple domains," including measurable abnormalities in brain functioning and persistent emotional and behavioral problems. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/6/e20163023>

Telehealth expands access to healthcare services like mental healthcare that might otherwise be unavailable due to quarantine, location, and expense. AB 2464 (Aguiar-Curry) would fund eight grants to not-for-profit children's hospitals to establish mental health "teleECHO clinics" to virtually connect health care and mental health specialists with general practitioners bringing best-practice health and mental health care to patients no matter where they are, and equipping practitioners with the knowledge they need to provide specialty care in their communities.

Pediatricians across the state strongly support AB 2464 (Aguiar-Curry) and urge you to vote AYE. 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 cursive script that reads "Kris E. Calvin".

Kris Calvin, CEO
American Academy of Pediatrics, California