



April 1, 2019

Senator Richard Pan, Chair
Committee on Health
State Capitol, Room 2191
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 175 (Pan): Healthcare coverage: minimum essential coverage
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Senator Pan:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 175 (Pan) to require that California residents ensure that they and their dependents are covered under minimum essential coverage for health care services, and would also establish the Health Care Coverage Penalty Fund to improve the affordability of healthcare coverage for Californians.

After the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, California's uninsured rate decreased from 20% to as low as 7% in recent years. However, the repeal of the "individual mandate"—the requirement that all individuals maintain insurance or face a tax penalty—has endangered the success of the ACA. The Covered California marketplace depends on a wide consumer base to maintain affordable health care plans so when people don't participate it drives up the cost for those who do. Moreover, when people do not maintain their insurance coverage, they are more likely to skip preventive care and to delay treatment until a condition has become costly, difficult or impossible to treat. Our pediatrician members are especially concerned that parents who do not maintain insurance coverage for their children will skip those checkups and sick visits when faced with the prospect of paying for these routine visits out of pocket. This could have significant negative health effects for these children, as these visits are essential for detecting treatable health concerns before they become far more serious. SB 175 would keep California children healthy by reinstating the ACA's individual mandate. This would benefit the health and well-being of millions of California children and families: both those who would not have insurance if not for the individual mandate, and those who depend on the insurance marketplace for coverage.

Pediatricians across the state of California urge an AYE vote on SB 175 (Pan). 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 blue ink, appearing to read "Susan Wu".

Susan Wu, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

Cc: AAP-CA Leadership; AAPCA Advocate Lydia Bourne