



March 11, 2019

Senator Toni Atkins  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 66 (Atkins): Medi-Cal: federally qualified health center and rural health clinic services.**  
**AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Senator Atkins:

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 66 allowing community health centers to bill Medi-Cal for mental health services and other medical services administered to the same patient on the same day.

My patient Camila is a two-year-old child with speech delay and failure to thrive. Her mother, a victim of domestic violence, struggles with depression. They currently live in shelters and Camila's mother is unable to coordinate primary care visits and mental health services with her work study schedule, affecting Camila's health. If we can coordinate therapy for the family with primary care appointments for evaluation of Camila's growth and vaccination, we can give this family the support it needs to break the cycle of poor health outcomes.

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) care for approximately 1.66 million children, nearly 30% of the Medi-Cal enrollment for children ages 0-21 years in California. These sites improve access to preventative primary care health services for our underserved populations. Currently, approximately 37% of children in need of mental health services are unable to obtain them, with a greater lack of access to mental health care for Children with Special Health Care Needs. This legislation would enable reimbursement for a second visit for mental health services on the same day as another primary care visit allowing families who often face difficulties with transportation, to receive much needed mental health support.

SB 66 would help millions of Californians more easily access mental health services by allowing community health centers to be properly reimbursed when a patient requires mental health care and other services on the same day. This stands to improve California children's health and well-being and potentially save lives.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support SB 66. 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, appearing to read "Mona Patel".

Mona Patel, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
State Government Affairs Committee, Co-Chair  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA CEO Kris Calvin; AAP-CA Leadership; AAP-CA Advocate Lydia Bourne