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March 9, 2021

The Honorable Sidney Kamlager
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0054

RE: AB-118 Emergency services: community response: grant program
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Kamlager,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 118, as introduced on December 18, 2020, which would enact the Community Response Initiative to Strengthen Emergency Systems Act or the CRISES Act, a pilot grant program with the goal of strengthening community-based responses to local emergency situations.

Currently, the primary option for people in crisis is to call the police, but the police aren't always the best solution. Sometimes, the nature of a crisis requires mental health or social welfare expertise or local solutions best provided by community-based organizations (CBOs). The CRISES Act would promote community-based responses to crises such as those relating to people experiencing homelessness, mental health problems, and substance use problems, as well as intimate partner violence, community violence, and natural disasters.

In the past year, people across this nation have taken to the streets to demand an end to police violence. Re-envisioning policing starts with community-based organizations (CBOs) who can provide critically informed, compassionate, and potentially life-saving responses for vulnerable people. AB 118 would create and strengthen alternatives to law enforcement in response to crisis situations not related to or that do not require a Fire Department or Emergency Medical Service (EMS) response in communities where there is a history and pattern of racial profiling, law enforcement violence, gaps in law enforcement service or where vulnerable populations live. By expanding the participation of CBOs in emergency responses, we can de-escalate crises, reduce reactive violence, and get vital services to people in need.

AAP-CA strongly supports AB 118. 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 "Angela Dangvu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela Dangvu, M.D. FAAP
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership