

March 23, 2021

The Honorable Rob Bonta
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0018

RE: AB 368 (Bonta) Food Prescriptions
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Bonta,

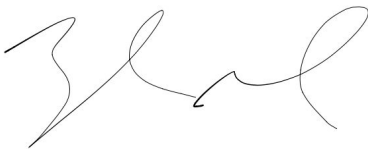
The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 368, as amended on March 18, 2021, which would require the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to provide food prescriptions to eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

Food insecurity has negative impacts on people's health and affects 13% of US households, according to a report in the *Journal of Urban Health*.¹ Food insecurity is more likely to impact African-American, Hispanic, and disabled people.² These same populations also are more likely to experience major chronic diseases with children being disproportionately affected by these health disparities.³ The COVID-19 pandemic has only made these disparities more apparent and more exigent. Providing medically appropriate food support or food prescriptions may improve multiple health outcomes for food-insecure individuals living with chronic health conditions. Food prescriptions can be used to treat, reverse, and prevent chronic health conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and depression.

AB 368 establishes a two-year "Food Prescription" pilot program in partnership with Medi-Cal managed care plans in three California counties. The pilot will provide medically supportive food to individuals who are deemed to be at high risk and whose conditions are diet-related. Behavioral, cooking, nutrition education, coaching, and counseling may also be provided.

AAP-CA strongly supports AB 368. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Zarah Iqbal, MD FAAP
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5359179/>

² <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/food-insecurity>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3794652/>