
April 28, 2021

The Honorable Sydney Kamlager
State Capitol, Room 4062
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB-369 Medi-Cal services: persons experiencing homelessness
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Kamlager,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 369, the Street Medicine Act, as amended on April 26, 2021. This bill would extend full Medi-Cal benefits to persons experiencing homelessness, and allow providers to bill Medi-Cal for services offered to persons experiencing homelessness outside of a traditional medical facility.

Nearly 270,000 school-aged children in California experienced homelessness in 2019.¹ People experiencing homelessness have difficulty accessing preventative and mental health care. Even when insured under Medi-Cal, 73% have never seen a healthcare provider. Basic survival needs, transportation, difficulty keeping active insurance due to lack of a mailing address and lack of IDs, make it difficult, if not impossible, for people who are unhoused to access care in the traditional healthcare model. This has dire consequences. In 2020, 1,383 homeless individuals died on the streets of Los Angeles alone.²

Street medicine is the provision of health care through mobile services such as walking teams, medical vans, and outdoor clinics.³ Using tailored outreach and engagement strategies, street medicine programs can help link people to brick-and-mortar primary care sites and housing while providing essential services in the field to people who have not sought, and sometimes do not want to seek, care in traditional settings. Forms of street medicine covered under AB 369 may include delivering medicine in a shelter or a transitional house location, or delivering medicine via street teams.

Street medicine removes access barriers by providing direct, comprehensive care to the unsheltered homeless where they live. AAP-CA strongly supports AB 369. 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<http://transformschoools.ucla.edu/news/stateofcrisis/>

² <https://asmdc.org/press-releases/asm-kamlager-introduces-bill-innovate-how-medical-care-delivered-homeless-populations>

³ <https://www.streetmedicine.org>