

March 26, 2021

The Honorable Marc Berman
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0024

RE: AB 563 (Berman) School-based health programs.
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assemblymember Berman,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 563 as introduced in February 11, 2021, which would establish an Office of School-Based Health programs within the California Department of Education (CDE), to provide leadership and assistance to school districts offering health programs through the public schools.

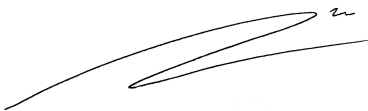
The Local Educational Agency Medi-Cal Billing Option Program (LEA BOP) has recently expanded. The program offers increased opportunities for schools to provide much needed health services to students in a familiar environment. The importance of the role schools play in delivering health services to students has become even clearer during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's imperative that schools be prepared to help students as California returns to in-person learning and beyond. At the moment, however, no institutionalized partnership between the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), which oversees Medi-Cal, and the CDE exists, making it difficult for the departments to coordinate health programs and services delivered through schools.

To run smoothly and maximize funding eligibility, school districts require support from state agencies responsible for health and education. Both CDE and DHCS are familiar with their own sets of regulatory policies and responsibilities. Coordination between and guidance from the CDE and the DHCS would help schools ensure that all Medicaid-enrolled children receive services.

AB 563 would strengthen the institutional partnership between the DHCS and CDE by creating an office within CDE to coordinate various health programs and services delivered through the schools.

AAP-CA strongly supports AB 563. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Melissa Ruiz, MD FAAP
Chair, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership