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April 18, 2018

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH
Director and State Public Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
1615 Capitol Avenue
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, California 95899-7377

Re: AB 1871 (Bonta): Charter Schools: Free and Reduced-Price Meals (Support)

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board meeting on April 5, 2018 to take a Support recommendation on AB 1871 (Bonta), a bill that would require a charter school to provide each needy pupil with one nutritionally adequate free or reduced-price meal during each school day. While current law requires each school district or county superintendent of schools to provide needy students one nutritionally adequate free or reduced-price meal during the school day, charter schools are currently exempt from these laws.

California's high costs of living force many families to choose between basic needs such as food, medicine, and rent. California is now home to the most charter schools and charter school pupils in the country. More than 340,000 of California's charter school pupils are low income, but charter schools are exempt from requirements to offer low-income pupils a daily, free or reduced-price, nutritious school meal. AB 1871 would close this gap by requiring charter schools to provide a free or reduced-price meal to each needy pupil, thereby helping ensure that students receive the necessary nutrition to learn and thrive. For these reasons, CCLHO recommends a support position on AB 1871.

CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now California Department of Public Health), other departments, boards, commissions, and officials of federal, state and local agencies, the Legislature and other organizations on all matters affecting health. CCLHO membership consists of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions.

Should you have any questions, please contact me by phone at 530-265-7154 or by email at ken.cutler@co.nevada.ca.us.

Sincerely, and on behalf of the CCLHO membership,

Original signed by Dr. Ken Cutler

Ken Cutler, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers