



1615 Capitol Ave., Suite 73.771  
P.O. Box 997377, MS 7003  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

**PHONE:** 916.440.7594  
**FAX:** 916.440.7595  
<http://www.cclho.org>

**Jake Hanson, MPH**  
*Executive Administrator*  
[Jake.Hanson@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:Jake.Hanson@cdph.ca.gov)

#### Officers

Robert Oldham, MD, MSHA  
President  
Placer County

*Vacant*  
President-Elect

Karen Relucio, MD  
Treasurer  
Napa County

Nancy Williams, MD, MPH  
Secretary  
El Dorado County

Julie Vaishampayan, MD, MPH  
Legislative Coordinator  
Stanislaus County

Matthew Willis, MD, MPH  
Regulations Coordinator  
Marin County

Kenneth Cutler, MD, MPH  
Past President  
Nevada County

Andrew Miller, MD  
Executive Officer at-Large  
Butte County

#### Directors-at-Large

Anissa Davis, MD, MPH  
City of Long Beach

Cameron Kaiser, MD, MPH  
Riverside County

Ying Goh, MD, MSHS,  
City of Pasadena

Edward Moreno, MD, MPH  
Monterey County

Gail Newel, MD, MPH  
San Benito County

Kismet Baldwin, MD,  
San Joaquin County

Ron Chapman, MD, MS,  
Yolo County

May 14, 2019

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 18 (Levine): Firearms excise tax

Dear Dr. Smith:

From 2000 to 2015, there were 24,922 firearm homicides and 23,682 firearm suicides in California. Non-Hispanic black men had the highest rate of firearm homicide, while Hispanic men had the greatest number of deaths. However, virtually every community in California has been impacted by gun violence.

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) is committed to health equity for all Californians. We have determined that we if we are serious about promoting health equity, we must address firearm violence. Therefore, this legislative session CCLHO analyzed several bills addressing firearm violence, and debated those bills at our Semi-Annual Membership Meeting on May 1, 2019.

CCLHO membership voted to recommend a Support position on AB 18 (Levine). This bill would impose an excise tax in the amount of \$25 per firearm on a retailer for the sale of a handgun or semiautomatic rifle or shotgun sold as new. This bill would require that the revenues collected be deposited in the CalVIP Firearm Tax Fund, which the bill would create. These funds would be continuously appropriated to the Board of State and Community Corrections to provide California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program grants. CCLHO members have indicated a strong support for programs like CalVIP that aim to prevent violence in our highest risk communities.

During our debate on this bill, we concluded that AB 18 would in no way infringe upon any Constitutional right to bear arms. Our members felt that the \$25 excise tax proposed in AB 18 would help to fund programs that help to prevent firearm violence while not placing an undue burden on prospective gun owners. While only a fraction of Californians own a firearm, there are estimated to be over 30 million firearms currently in the state due to individuals owning multiple firearms. So we concluded that most of the purchases impacted by this proposed excise tax are likely to be purchases of additional firearms by current gun owners.

CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the 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 email at [roidham@placer.ca.gov](mailto:roidham@placer.ca.gov) or by phone at (530) 745-3121.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Oldham, MD, MSHA  
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers

