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May 25, 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 2005 (Santiago): Child Abuse Central Index (Support)

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Semiannual Business Meeting on May 9, 2018 to recommend a Support position on AB 2005 (Santiago). AB 2005 would require a police or sheriff's department to forward reports of investigated and substantiated cases of child abuse or severe neglect to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for inclusion in the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI).

AB 2005 seeks to reinstate the ability of police or sheriffs to report cases of child abuse and severe neglect to DOJ to include in the CACI. Currently, according to a sponsor of the bill, Child Protective Service agencies may submit child abuse or severe neglect cases to the DOJ; however, because CPS agencies investigate cases involving family members, only known or suspected familial abusers are reported to the DOJ, resulting in known or suspected non-familial abusers, such as teachers, day care workers, coaches and clergy, not being reported to DOJ. CCLHO recommends allowing law enforcement to forward substantiated cases for inclusion in the CACI to ensure that the health and welfare of children is protected.

The information in the CACI is available to aid law enforcement investigations and prosecutions and helps social welfare agencies screen applicants for licensing in child care facilities and foster homes. Childhood traumas raise the risk of long term health impacts. The effectiveness of the CACI in reducing abuse is dependent upon the quality of the information provided to the index.

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 or.

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