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May 25, 2018

Will Lightbourne
Director
California Department of Social Services
744 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2119 (Gloria): Foster Care: Gender Affirming Health Care and Behavioral Health (Support)

Dear Director Lightbourne:

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 2119 (Gloria), a bill that would provide all foster care youth the right to have access to gender affirming health care and gender affirming behavioral health care. AB 2119 would also prohibit licensed professionals or other individuals, from subjecting a foster care youth to any treatment, intervention, or conduct that seeks to change his or her gender identity.

AB 2119 outlines gender affirming behavioral health and health care as care that respects the gender identity of the patient, including the following:

- Interventions to suppress the development of endogenous secondary sex characteristics;
- Interventions to align the patient's appearance or physical body with the patient's gender identity; and
- Interventions to alleviate symptoms of clinically significant distress resulting from gender dysphoria, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition; and
- Developmentally appropriate exploration and integration of identity, reduction of distress, adaptive coping, and strategies to increase family acceptance.

CCLHO recommends a support position on AB 2119 to help ensure that transgender and gender non-conforming foster care youth receive necessary medical and mental health care, and promote the safety, well-being, and permanency of all children in California's child welfare system. These assurances of gender affirming care are particularly important to foster care youth, who experience higher percentages of transgender and gender non-conforming youth than the population as a whole. According to a study by the Williams Institute, 5.6 percent of foster care youth in Los Angeles County identified as transgender¹, as compared to approximately 1 to 3 percent of the overall U.S. youth population believed to identify as transgender. Multiple studies show that transgender youth suffer disproportionate negative health outcomes.

1. https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS_report_final-aug-2014.pdf

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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 email at ken.cutler@co.nevada.ca.us or by phone at 530-265-7154.

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

cc: Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH, Director and State Public Health Officer, California Department of Public Health