



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>

Leah Northrop, MPA, MAIS
Executive Administrator
Leah.Northrop@cdph.ca.gov

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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 2256 (Santiago): Law Enforcement Agencies: Opioid Antagonist (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 2256 (Santiago), a bill that would authorize a pharmacy or wholesaler to furnish naloxone hydrochloride (naloxone) or other opioid antagonists to law enforcement agencies in California. This change is necessary since existing law authorizes a pharmacy to furnish naloxone or other opioid antagonists to a school district, county office of education, or charter school under specified circumstances, but does not currently include law enforcement.

The current opioid overdose epidemic seriously has hurt communities across the country, including many communities in California. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids in 2016 was 5 times higher than in 1999. In California, opioid related deaths now outnumber traffic fatalities. As law enforcement is often the first responder to an opioid overdose, removing this barrier to law enforcement obtaining naloxone from a pharmacy could help prevent more lives from being lost to opioid overdoses.

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