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March 9, 2016

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California Department of Public Health
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RE: AB 2638 (Gatto): Public Health: Vaccinations - OPPOSE

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board meeting on March 3, 2016 to take an Oppose recommendation on AB 2638 (Gatto), a bill that would specify that a licensed physician is not subject to discipline or liability for providing a written statement that immunization is not considered safe for a particular child, in which case that child shall be exempt from specified immunization requirements.

The Medical Board of California is responsible for licensure and disciplinary actions for physicians practicing in California. This responsibility should not be diminished by exempting specific physician clinical activities from oversight of the Medical Board. Immunizations are a safe, effective, and essential part of public health practice and should be held to the same standards of practice as all other parts of physician practice. CCLHO therefore recommends an oppose position to this bill.

As you are aware, CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now the California Department of Public Health), other departments, boards, and commissions, as well as 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.

This position of oppose is consistent with CCLHO's strategic priority of providing advice and scientific expertise on public health matters.

If you have any questions, please contact me at jberreman@ci.berkeley.ca.us or 510-981-5301. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Dr. Janet Berreman

Janet Berreman, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers