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December 23, 2015

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California Department of Public Health  
1615 Capitol Avenue, Suite 73.720  
PO Box 997377, MS 0500  
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RE: Powdered Alcohol Ban- Support (2016 Legislation)

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) Board of Directors voted to recommend support for the introduction of legislation during the 2016 legislative session to ban the sale of powdered alcohol in the State of California. CCLHO urges the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to support such legislation as well.

In March 2015, the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) approved a product called Palcohol; this powdered product can be added to water to make an alcoholic beverage. It is now approved for marketing in the United States unless a state specifically prohibits it. To date, there is no powdered alcohol being sold in the United States. A total of 27 states have banned its sale as of November 2015, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. California statute does not currently address powdered alcohol.

Several potential problems have been identified if the sale of powdered alcohol is allowed:

- Mixing powdered alcohol with smaller amounts of water than directed could result in extremely potent beverages.
- Flavored products could be easily marketed to children.
- The product could be used to "spike" alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages, with or without consent.
- This product could be easy to conceal and bring to areas where alcohol is prohibited, such as schools, or where alcohol is sold and regulated, such as cultural events.
- Monitoring for over intoxication with this product becomes much more difficult when customers can bring alcohol to an event in powdered form. Monitoring for the sale of this product would be difficult, at an event or location where retailers are required to monitor customers' intake to prevent over intoxication.

This position is consistent with CCLHO's Criteria for Priority Legislation in that it is an opportunity for health officers to use their professional expertise to inform public policy in a manner that will protect vulnerable populations (youth and under-aged drinkers). In addition, this is a population-health issue, as alcohol intoxication and its effects are wide-ranging on the population as a whole, not just on those who consume the products.

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH  
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As you know, the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) is an organization of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions established in statute in 1947 to consult with, advise, and make recommendations to the California Department of Public Health, other departments, and the Legislature on matters affecting health.

If you have questions, please contact me at 510-981-5301 or at [jberreman@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto:jberreman@ci.berkeley.ca.us).  
Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet Berreman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

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