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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
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RE: SB 1192 (Monning): Children's Meals (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 SB 1192 (Monning). SB 1192 would require restaurants serving meals primarily targeted and marketed to children to make the default drink option served in those meals a healthy beverage, specifically water, sparkling water, flavored water with no added sweeteners, or milk. Customers may still explicitly ask to replace the healthy drink with a sugary beverage at no cost, but SB 1192 would require the default beverage offered in a children's meal to be a healthy option.

The consumption of sugary beverages is of concern to public health, as the rates of diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular and oral health diseases continue to rise in California. A major contributing factor to this increase is the change in dietary habits, as Californians now spend more income on meals prepared outside of the home. Recent studies have shown as many as 34 percent of children consume fast food on a given day and most kids' meals include a sugary drink that can contain more than the weekly amount of sugar recommended for children. Sugary beverages are a top source of calories in children's diets and do not typically provide any positive nutritional value. Research has shown that drinking just one sugary drink a day increases a child's likelihood of being overweight by 55 percent.

CCLHO recommends a support position on SB 1192, to improve children's health by setting nutrition beverage standards for children's meals served in California. Many restaurants and businesses throughout California have recognized consumers' shifting demands for healthier drink and meal options, and have self-imposed policies that offer only healthy beverages with meals that are marketed and offered to children. McDonalds, Jack-in-the-Box, Applebee's, Wendy's, Dairy Queen, Burger King, Subway, Panera, and IHOP have all voluntarily made efforts to no longer offer sugary drinks as a part of their kid's meal offerings. Local communities throughout California have also already taken steps to implement these policies, including Long Beach, Stockton, Perris, Cathedral City, Berkeley, and San Francisco. Studies have demonstrated that consumers are more likely to choose the healthy default beverage option offered with kids' meals rather than request an alternative option. A statewide policy on healthy default beverage options would have a direct impact on families making healthier and more nutritious choices when they choose to eat outside of the home.

Dr. Karen L. Smith
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As you know, 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