



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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Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH, Director and State Public Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
1615 Capitol Avenue, Suite 73.720
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

RE: SB 1238 (Pan): Inmates: Biomedical Data (Support)

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board meeting on April 13, 2016 to take a Support recommendation on SB 1238 (Pan), a bill that would specify that biomedical research, which currently law prohibits from being conducted on prisoners, does not include the accumulation of statistical data in the assessment of the effectiveness of nonexperimental public health programs or treatment programs in which inmates routinely participate. SB 1238 would also authorize records-based biomedical research involving inmates that uses existing information, but which does not include prospective interaction with human subjects.

Substantial work is currently performed in the prison setting with respect to routine monitoring of inmates and treatment of inmates (Valley Fever is one example) that has significant public health value for our communities. However, current law prohibits reporting of that information because of the broad interpretation of "biomedical research." This bill would address these current limitations. Removing these limitations would also facilitate the ability to better advocate for the inmate population and address disparities through the review and assessment of the statistical data.

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 support for SB 1238 is consistent with CCLHO's strategic priority of taking a leadership role in the practice of public health and policy development. Please contact me at jberreman@ci.berkeley.ca.us or at 510-981-5301 if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Dr. Janet Berreman

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