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Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH, Director and State Public Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
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RE: SB 877 (Pan): Reporting and Tracking of Violent Deaths (Support)

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board Business meeting on April 13, 2016 to take a Support recommendation on SB 877 (Pan), a bill that would require the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to establish and maintain the California Electronic Violent Death Reporting System (CalEVDRS). This bill would also require CDPH to collect data on violent deaths and contract with counties to collect certain data.

California does not currently participate in the CDC Electronic Violent Death Reporting System. Violent deaths, among other injuries, represent a concern for public health, and it would be beneficial to develop and implement a surveillance system for violent deaths. Furthermore, the issue of violent deaths is of importance for many Local Health Departments, and the establishment and maintenance of the CalEVDRS would facilitate surveillance and research on how to best prevent violent deaths. While SB 877 authorizes CDPH to apply for grants to help establish and maintain this system, it does not directly provide resources for this purpose. The fact that resources are not included with CalEVDRS is a concern; CCLHO strongly recommends that sufficient resources are included to support CalEVDRS.

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 the reporting and tracking of violent deaths is consistent with CCLHO's strategic priority of taking a leadership role in the practice of public health and policy development.

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

Sincerely,

Original signed by Dr. Janet Berreman

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