



CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

January 24, 2012

The Honorable Alex Padilla
State Capitol, Room 4038
Sacramento, California 94248

Re: SB 694 (Padilla): Support

Dear Senator Padilla:

The California Society of Pediatric Dentistry (CSPD) supports the passage of SB 694 (Padilla), which would establish an effective state oral health infrastructure and a comprehensive approach to addressing the multiple barriers of accessing dental services for many of California's children.

CSPD is the professional membership organization representing California's nearly 600 pediatric dental providers, educators and researchers. Our members provide primary and specialty oral health care, with a mission of serving our members and the public by advocating for the optimal oral health of infants, children and adolescents.

Childhood tooth decay is a significant health problem affecting nearly two-thirds of California's elementary school- age children. In spite of the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and other recognized health organizations that children have their first dental visit no later than one year of age and regular periodic examinations thereafter, one in four California children between birth and eleven years of age have never seen a dentist. These children are disproportionately from low-income households, of minority ethnicity, live in rural or other dentally-underserved areas of the state, and are enrolled in the state's public health programs.

The reasons they fail to gain access to dental services are many. A Statewide Office of Oral Health (the office) headed by a State Dental Director is the necessary first step in coordinating state oral health programs that address these disparities, assembling resources from existing federal and other grant programs which support oral health, developing a state oral health plan, and assisting and supporting county and local initiatives and jurisdictions. SB 694 provides there would be no state funding for the establishment or maintenance of the office, ensuring it will be financially self-sufficient or become inoperative January 1, 2016.

As part of the comprehensive approach to addressing barriers to dental care, SB 694 authorizes the office to design and implement a rigorous university-based scientific study on the safety,



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quality, cost-effectiveness and patient satisfaction of expanded dental procedures performed by traditional and non-traditional providers in specified public health settings. CSPD endorses this research as a necessary prerequisite for any evidence-based workforce recommendations regarding the state's unmet oral health needs for children. An expanded dental team with a non-dentist provider, after appropriate education and training, capable of rendering basic preventive and restorative services to low-income children at or near where they live or go to school, may have the potential to reach the population not now receiving oral health care. However, the safety, quality, cost-effectiveness and patient satisfaction of such procedures by non-dentists necessary to make such a recommendation have not been established. The proposed study would determine this information under carefully-controlled parameters where safety and quality outcomes could be assessed without bias. In such an environment, the same patient protection and student oversight provided to dental students treating patients in a dental school would apply to the expanded duties training called for in this study.

CSPD is committed to improving the oral health of the children of California. SB 694 holds this promise and for that reason we urge passage by the Senate.

Paul Reggiardo, DDS
Public Policy Advocate, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

cc: Officers and Directors, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry
Dr. Ray Stewart, Executive Director, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry