



March 3, 2011

Governor Jerry Brown
c/o State Capitol Building, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: 916-558-3160

Re: Senate Bill 36

Dear Governor Brown:

I write on behalf of the Health Improvement Partnership (HIP) of Santa Cruz County to express our strong support for Senate Bill 36 as part of our overall commitment to maximizing health coverage for California children. HIP is a nonprofit coalition of health care organizations dedicated to increasing access to care. Toward that end, we manage the Healthy Kids program which aims to cover all local children so they have access to comprehensive medical, dental, vision, and mental health services.

SB 36 would allow communities to draw down federal funding made available through the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP) which is not currently being claimed by California. S-CHIP enables health coverage for thousands of children in California, and this bill builds on the experiences of both State and local communities. Importantly, given the significant financial challenges faced by California, this bill imposes no new costs for the State, while leveraging available federal resources.

SB 36 would align and conform current State law (Assembly Bill 495, Chapter 648, Statutes of 2001) to allow counties to take full advantage of the eligibility expansion extended under federal law enacted in February 2009. Most importantly, it would allow qualified local programs – including potentially, Health Kids of Santa Cruz County – to draw down available federal funding to maintain health coverage for low-income children. Given the historic passage of federal health reform, and the significant economic strains facing families, it is critically important to maintain locally supported health coverage programs as a bridge to the implementation of health reform components that will be effective in 2014. We view this as a distinct opportunity to expand and strengthen coverage efforts in Santa Cruz.

Cabrillo College Student Health Center • Central Coast Alliance for Health • Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County • Diabetes Health Center
Dientes Community Dental Care • Dominican Hospital • Dominican Medical Foundation • Dominican Pediatric Clinic • Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust
Palo Alto Medical Foundation • Physicians Medical Group of Santa Cruz County • Planned Parenthood Mar Monte • Salud Para La Gente
Santa Cruz County Health Care Outreach Coalition • Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency • Santa Cruz County Medical Society • Santa Cruz County Public Health
Santa Cruz Women's Health Center • Sutter Maternity and Surgery Center • Watsonville Community Hospital

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Every dollar invested by local communities under this program will be matched by at least one federal dollar through this bill, doubling the impact that can be achieved in sustaining children's coverage. Research has shown that coverage helps keep children healthy and in-school, ultimately benefiting the state as a whole over the long-term.

Thank you for your support of SB 36.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eleanor Littman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "L".

Eleanor Littman RN MSN

Executive Director

Cc: Senator Joe Simitian