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May 5, 2016

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH, Director and State Public Health Officer  
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**RE: AB 170 (Gatto): Newborn Screening: Genetic Diseases: Blood Samples Collected - Oppose**

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Semiannual Business meeting on April 13, 2016 to take an Oppose recommendation on AB 170 (Gatto), a bill that would require the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to provide information about the statewide newborn genetic disease testing program, and to obtain a form signed by the parent or guardian acknowledging receiving information regarding the storage, retention, and use of the newborn child's blood sample for medical research, among other provisions.

CCLHO recommends an oppose position as the above requirement, and other provisions included in AB 170 that would be imposed on CDPH, birth hospitals and local registrars of births are unduly burdensome. Furthermore, these requirements will likely result in far fewer newborns being screened for genetic diseases, some newborns with genetic diseases not being identified and provided appropriate follow-up services; and will likely significantly impair the statewide newborn genetic screening program. No evidence has been provided that any newborn blood sample collected and retained by CDPH has been mishandled or otherwise caused harm, nor any indication that the program as it is currently functioning is failing to appropriately and effectively carry out its mission and responsibilities.

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 Oppose on AB 170 is consistent with CCLHO's strategic priority to provide advice and scientific expertise on public health matters.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [jberreman@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto: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