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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 1223 (Huff): Driver's Licenses: Provisional Licenses (Support)

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board meeting on June 2, 2016 to take a Support recommendation on SB 1223 (Huff), a bill that would extend the upper age from 18 to 21 years of age for the provisional driver's license program. Provisional driver's license program restrictions during the first year of licensure include a prohibition from driving between the hours of 11 pm and 5 am, and transporting passengers under 20 years of age, except for under specified circumstances.

The provisional driver's license program has been shown to reduce the number of teen driver-caused accidents for teens that graduate from the program. However, a recent California Department of Motor Vehicles report showed that 37.5 percent of newly licensed drivers were between the ages of 18 and 20 and therefore not covered by the provisional driver's license program, resulting in a significant number of teens obtaining their first driver's license without the education, training and graduated driving experience of this program. Data also shows that 18 and 19 year old novice drivers are involved in more fatal and injury crashes than younger novice drivers who participated in the provisional driver's license program.

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 increasing the age limit for provisional driver's licenses is consistent with CCLHO's strategic priority of providing scientific expertise on public health matters. It is further consistent with the legislative priority of providing recommendations on population-based issues that affect the health of all Californians.

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

Sincerely,

Original signed by Dr. Janet Berreman

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