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Executive Administrator

April 17, 2015

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California Department of Public Health  
PO Box 997377, MS 0500  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

**RE: SB 573 (Pan): Statewide Open Data Portal– Support**

Dear Dr. Smith:

As you know, the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) is an organization of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions established in statute in 1947 to consult with, advise, and make recommendations to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), other departments, boards, commissions and officials of federal, state, and local government, the Legislature, and any other organization or association on matters affecting health.

CCLHO has taken a support position on SB 573, a bill by Senator Pan related to the creation of a statewide open data portal, and urges CDPH to also support this legislation.

This bill would require the Governor to appoint a Chief Data Officer, who would report to the Secretary of Government Operations, on or before January 1, 2016. The Chief Data Officer would be required to, among other things, create the statewide open data portal in order to provide public access to data sets from agencies within California. SB 573 would also require each agency, as defined in the bill, to appoint a data coordinator who would be responsible for compliance with these provisions; it would also require compliance with all state and federal privacy laws and regulations for any data published on the statewide open data portal or any other open data portal operated by a state agency.

CCLHO supports the creation of a statewide open data portal so that the public, researchers, decision makers, and public health officials can access available data sets in a consistent, convenient and comprehensive manner. The California Health and Human Services Agency has embarked on creating an open data portal for its departments, beginning with CDPH. This effort has been met with enthusiasm and support from users of the data, and it has proven to be both feasible and valuable. Similar open data portals are operated by multiple states and local jurisdictions throughout the United States.

A statewide open data portal would provide a number of key benefits to California. It would tangibly demonstrate governmental transparency with respect to public access to data. It would allow users to access the available data from all state agencies through a single conduit. It would enable uses of the data to advance research and policy development as well as better informed decision making. A statewide open data portal

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH, Director  
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would also prompt the stewards of the data to improve the quality of their data sets and to improve data consistency (e.g. using consistent age groups and definitions for race/ethnicity across all programs and, eventually, across agencies).

If you have questions, please contact me at [Muntu.davis@acgov.org](mailto:Muntu.davis@acgov.org) or 510-267-8010.  
Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Muntu Davis MD, MPH". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Muntu Davis, MD, MPH  
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers