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**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

County Administration Building
 105 East Anapamu Street
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101
 Telephone: (805) 568-2190
www.countyofsb.org

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

February 3, 2021

Governor Gavin Newsom
 1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Request for Delay of Pharmacy Transition

Dear Governor Newsom:

The County Board of Supervisors requests on behalf of the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (SBCPHD), as a Local Health Jurisdiction and a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), **that the Administration delay the start of the pharmacy transition until January 2022.**

We are well aware of the time and investment the state has made in the pharmacy transition, however the state and its health care delivery system must remain focused on controlling the COVID pandemic. We are actively participating in the Administration's efforts to secure vaccines, establish centralization for communication and distribution, and determine an appropriate prioritization schema. This is where all energy must remain until we have sufficient numbers of Santa Barbara County residents vaccinated. We know we need to increase our pace and as a LHJ and FQHC provider, we are ready and eager to lead the effort in our county. This is where all of our collective time and energy needs to be focused.

The PHD operates five health care centers and three homeless shelter clinics serving nearly 30,000 people including Santa Barbara County's most vulnerable residents, and is proud to serve on the front lines of the County's COVID-19 response. Our Department and our Health Care Centers have a robust relationship with CenCal Health, the local Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan and we have systems in place today that ensures pharmacy access to Medi-Cal beneficiaries and can easily continue to keep these systems in place. Delaying at the last minute as was done in December will further strain delivery systems and further impact Medi-Cal beneficiaries. We urge the Administration to act quickly, acknowledge the gravity of this moment and delay the transition now.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a 2021 Legislative Platform that includes the Access to Quality Health Services Plank, which specifically states that the County is committed to providing health care services for individuals who receive Medi-Cal or Medicare in addition to those without other coverage options, as well as the Pandemic Funding Relief for Local Governments Plank that states that the County, if not provided proper funding or backfill, will be forced to make significant reductions or cuts to a broad range of public services and to its staff. Counties need fiscal assistance to stabilize local government operations to offset the devastating impacts the crisis is having on our communities.

The County and SBCPHD are optimistic that as we work together on vaccine coordination and administration that the health care delivery system will be in a much stronger position this fall/winter the to rethink Medi-Cal delivery systems.

Sincerely,



Cliff Berg
Governmental Advocates, Inc.

cc: Tam Ma, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Adam Dorsey, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance
Laura Ayala, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
The Honorable Senator Monique Limon, 19th Senate District
The Honorable Assemblymember Steve Bennett, 37th Assembly District
The Honorable Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham, 35th Assembly District
Members, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors
Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Nancy Anderson, Legislative Coordinator, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisor