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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

February 11, 2021

The Honorable Assemblymember Jim Wood
Chair, Assembly Committee on Health
Capitol, Room 6005
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 32 (Aguiar-Curry) Telehealth - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Wood:

I am writing on behalf of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (SBCPHD) to state our support for AB 32 (Aguiar-Curry), which requires the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to extend the telehealth flexibilities, including telephone visits, in place during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Additionally, AB 32 ensures patients will continue to have access to care by maintaining parity in reimbursement for telehealth services for Medi-Cal managed care plans.

Local governments are at the forefront of the response to the pandemic in their communities. The County has increased spending to provide crucial public health services, emergency costs and help communities adapt to State COVID-19 Guidelines. AB 32 ensures that the expanded telehealth authorizations our state has been granted because of the COVID-19 emergency that allow for increased access to care remotely through video and telephone visits in Medi-Cal are not lost. The bill also ensures that medical professionals are paid equitably for their work, regardless of their patient's coverage type or location.

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 COVID-19 Pandemic has demonstrated that telehealth is a vital tool in ensuring access to care and health equity and must continue beyond the pandemic. AB 32 ensures telehealth can continue, increasing access to health care services for all Californians, particularly our Medi-Cal beneficiaries and most vulnerable communities. For these reasons, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors is pleased to support AB 32 (Aguiar-Curry). If you have questions about the Board's position, please contact the County's Legislative Coordinator, Nancy Anderson at 805-568-3407 or NAnderson@countyofsb.org.

Sincerely,



Cliff Berg
Governmental Advocates, Inc.

cc: Members, Assembly Committee on Health
Scott Bain, Principal Consultant, Assembly Committee on Health
Kristene Mapile, Principal Consultant, Assembly Committee on Health
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 Supervisors