



P.O. Box 8506
Redlands, CA 92375

January 13, 2014

Assembly Member Rob Bonta
Attention: Amy Alley, Legislative Director (amy.alley@asm.ca.gov)
California State Capitol, Room 6025
Sacramento, CA 95814
FAX: 916-319-2118; Voice: 916-319-2018

RE: SUPPORT FOR AB 966 (BONTA)

Dear Assembly Member Bonta:

The California Academy of Preventive Medicine (CAPM) has endorsed your bill AB 966, and wishes to be added to its list of supporting organizations made known to legislators, and to be kept informed of any amendments. CAPM is the state medical specialty society for physicians in the fields of public health and prevention.

It is well-known that sexual activity occurs in prisons, and some of it is consensual or could involve negotiations about condom use. California's state prisoners have been denied access to condoms, which increases the risk of transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. When inmates are released, infections acquired in prison are passed on to spouses and partners in the general community, and contribute to our epidemics of HIV/AIDS, syphilis, etc.

Wardens have been resistant to making condoms available, due to the misguided concern that it would be encouraging sodomy, which is still a crime in prisons. Actually, the only effect of condom availability would be a positive one, to decrease the illnesses and deaths that result from sexual activity that has always occurred. Concerns about contraband are irrelevant, because although condoms have been used to smuggle drugs into prisons, they have not been used to smuggle anything out of prisons.

The pilot program at Solano State Prison was successful, and the 2011 evaluation showed that confidential availability of condoms from no-charge vending machines did not cause any security or safety problems. A statewide program would be cost-effective, because prevention of only about 4 HIV cases per year would cover its cost.

Again, thank you for introducing this important public health measure. Please let us know if further communication to key legislators, or testimony at future Senate committee hearings, would be critical to the bill's success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald O. Lyman, M.D." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Donald O. Lyman, MD, DTPH
President, CAPM,