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September 19, 2013

Hon. Governor Edmund "Jerry" G. Brown, Jr.
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
FAX: 916-558-3160

RE: URGE SIGNATURE FOR SB 402 (DELEON)

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Academy of Preventive Medicine (CAPM) is pleased to announce our strong support for SB 402. Our Academy is the state medical specialty society for physicians practicing in the fields of public health and preventive medicine.

Breastfeeding is the foundation of preventive medicine for infants and toddlers. The known health benefits to the young are vast and far-ranging, including improved immunity to ear infections, diarrheal diseases, and respiratory illnesses; improved cognitive and social skills; and reduced risks of sudden infant death syndrome, childhood obesity, diabetes, and leukemia. Breastfeeding also plays a vital preventive role in maternal health. Breastfeeding mothers have improved post-partum weight loss and decreased risks of post-partum depression, metabolic syndrome, ovarian cancer, and premenopausal breast cancer. Rarely does the public reap so many benefits from a single intervention.

SB 402 will provide all Californian mothers and children access to proven hospital practices that will help them initiate and maintain successful breastfeeding. With increased initial breastfeeding success while in hospital, more mothers and their children will be able to meet the World Health Organization's recommendations to breastfeed exclusively for six months and complementarily for two years or longer. At the same time, local communities and the State as a whole will see healthier communities and a reduction in the burden of rising health care costs as a result of the primary prevention of childhood and maternal illnesses.

Researchers from Texas estimated that the 2007 per-delivery costs at hospitals implementing the Baby-Friendly steps were not significantly higher (1.6%-5%) than costs in hospitals that were not Baby-Friendly.¹ Such a modest investment, though, has been shown to provide significant return. Researchers from Boston estimated in 2009 that the United States could save \$13 billion in health care costs if 90% of U.S. families followed recommendations to breastfeed exclusively for 6 months.² California's share of that cost savings would be substantial, at least \$1.5 billion, much of it state-funded Medi-Cal savings. Implementing SB 402 brings California closer to realizing both the health and the economic benefits of breastfeeding.

In summary, CAPM believes that SB 402 is an important public health measure that is also fiscally sound. **Please sign this excellent bill, which will be an advance for public health.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald O. Lyman".

Donald O. Lyman, M.D., DTPH
President, CAPM; contact: saclymans@comcast.net

References

¹Bartick M. and Reinhold A. The burden of suboptimal breastfeeding in the United States: a pediatric cost analysis. *Pediatrics*; 125(50), e1048-e1056..

²DelliFraine J., Langabeer J., Williams J.F., Gong A.K., Delgado R.I., and Gill S.L. Cost comparison of Baby-Friendly and non-Baby-Friendly Hospitals in the United States. *Pediatrics*; 127(4), e989-e994.