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Bill Protecting Kids' Access to Vaccines Clears Senate Committee

Sacramento – Legislation designed to ensure that all children have access to life-saving immunizations, passed the Senate Health Committee today on a bipartisan vote.

Assembly Bill 2093, authored by Assemblymember Manuel Perez, D-Coachella, and co-sponsored by the California Medical Association, protects insured families from having to pay out-of-pocket expenses for vaccinations and requires doctors to be fully reimbursed for the costs of providing the vaccinations. The legislation, which has already passed the Assembly, is crucial for safeguarding public health and improving vaccination rates.

The recent outbreak of whooping cough illustrates the importance of widespread immunizations to prevent the spread of disease and protect public health. To date more than 900 cases have been diagnosed statewide and five deaths have been reported.

“Every year we’re reminded of the vital role vaccinations play in averting disease and keeping the public healthy,” said Brennan Cassidy, M.D., president of CMA. “Unfortunately, when insurance companies do not cover the full cost of immunizations fewer children get vaccinated, and that’s a danger to everyone.”

California law requires health plans and insurers to provide coverage for recommended immunizations. However, most health plans and health insurance companies don’t pay physicians the entire cost to provide vaccines.

Patients looking for alternatives for out-of-pocket expenses for vaccinations are sometimes referred to local public health clinics for these services thus utilizing resources that should be preserved for the uninsured.

AB 2093 removes the financial obstacles that can discourage patients from getting vaccinations and physicians from offering them.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the California Academy of Family Physicians have joined with CMA to co-sponsor the legislation.

The California Medical Association represents 35,000 physicians in all modes of practice and specialties. CMA is dedicated to the health of all patients in California.