



CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

May 4, 2006

The Honorable Lynn Daucher
Member, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2158
Sacramento, California

Re: AB 2775 (Daucher, Berg, Jones and Lieu)

Position: Support

Dear Assembly Member Daucher:

The California Society of Pediatric Dentistry strongly supports the passage of AB 2775, which would establish parity in the payment of anesthesia services provided under the Medi-Cal medical and dental (Denti-Cal) programs. Dental and medical anesthesiologists provide the same essential services for very young children and for patients of any age with disabilities for whom dental treatment cannot be accomplished without adjunctive pharmacologic management. Yet dental anesthesiologists, required to bill under the Denti-Cal Schedule of Maximum Allowances, are reimbursed at a fraction of what is paid their medical colleagues, and at a rate well below the cost of delivering these services. As a result, the provision of conscious sedation and general anesthesia in the dental office administered by a separate qualified provider (the dental anesthesiologist) when dental restorative care is rendered by the treating dentist is virtually non-existent in the Denti-Cal program.

We have long observed that these two vulnerable populations therefore either do not receive the care they need, or care is instead delivered in the hospital or accredited surgical facility. For some children, care in a hospital setting is the only appropriate approach. For other children, without underlying medical conditions, where care can safely be delivered in the dental facility, anesthesia services delivered in the hospital are not only delivered at a far greater cost to the state, but in a manner representing a very poor utilization of our health care resource system. Operating room time should be reserved for those needing care in the hospital, not those unable to secure an anesthesiologist in the dental facility because of an inequality in the state's Medi-Cal reimbursement system.

On behalf of the children and patients with disabilities served by the Medi-Cal program, we urge passage of AB 2775.

Martin Steigner
President, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

c: Co-authors Berg, Cohn, Jones and Lieu
Officers and Directors, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry
Dr. Mel Rowan, Executive Director, CSPD

The California Society of Pediatric Dentistry is the professional organization representing California's nearly 600 pediatric dental care specialists in teaching, research and clinical practice. Our mission is to advocate optimal oral health and general welfare of infants, children, adolescents and persons with special needs. We are the state component of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.