



CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

September 5, 2006

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Regarding AB 1433 (Emmerson and Laird)
Position: Support**

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The California Society of Pediatric Dentistry urges you to sign AB 1433, which would provide that children entering public schools receive an oral health assessment in the same manner they are currently required to obtain a school-entrance physical examination.

The need to identify children suffering from dental disease (dental decay and oral infection) is well documented. The recent *2004-05 Oral Health Needs Assessment Survey* of over 10,000 randomly-selected California kindergarten students documented that over half had already experienced tooth decay, more than one in four was currently in need of dental treatment, and most alarming, 4% were in need of urgent and immediate care because of dental pain or infection. With over 500,000 children enrolled in California kindergartens, more than 20,000 are in the classroom each day with pain or with an oral infection!

AB 1433 will make it more likely that debilitating dental conditions in young children are identified and treated earlier. The parental notification requirement incorporated in the law supplies knowledge on the importance of oral health, provides information to connect children to Healthy Families, Medi-Cal and other public programs, and contains a provision for children whose parents are unable to obtain, or do not wish to consent to, an assessment. Information gained from these assessments will provide crucial data enabling localities to address the individual oral needs of their communities and allow state planners to better allocate healthcare resources.

Please help improve the dental health of California's children by signing AB 1433.

Martin Steigner,
President, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

c: Authors Emmerson and Laird
Officers and Directors, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry
Dr. Paul Reggiardo, Public Policy Advocate, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry
Dr. Mel Rowan, Executive Director, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

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.

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