*Please put on your letterhead.* ***Submit letters by Tuesday, April 11 at 5:00 pm****.*

*Fax to 916-319-2197and email a copy to Tanya Lieberman at* *tanya.lieberman@asm.ca.gov* *and Lisa Eisenberg at* *leisenberg@schoolhealthcenters.org**.*

*<Today's Date>*

The Honorable Jim Wood

Assembly Health Committee
State Capitol, Room 6005
Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: AB 834 (O’Donnell) Office of School-Based Health Programs – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wood,

On behalf of [your organization’s name], I am writing in support of *Assembly Bill 834 (O’Donnell): Office of School-Based Health Programs*. AB 834 would establish an Office of School-Based Health programs within the California Department of Education (CDE), to provide leadership and assistance to school districts offering health programs through the public schools.

Children come to school every day suffering from mental health issues, poor nutrition, asthma, diabetes, and other conditions that seriously impact their ability to succeed. Schools are a critical partner in providing health services to students. For many students, schools play a critical role in managing chronic diseases, providing preventive care like immunizations or dental screenings, enrolling in health coverage, and referring to follow-up health care. Still, nearly 20% of public school staff report that their school does not provide adequate health services to students[[1]](#endnote-1). [For LEAs: include information about or an example of the health services provided in your schools and/or the need for more services. For others: add a sentence or two about your organization and why you support school health services.]

Since the early 1990’s, schools have been eligible to receive reimbursement from the federal government for direct health services provided at school sites through a program called LEA Medi-Cal Billing. School districts also participate in the Medicaid Administrative Activities program, which covers administrative costs for activities such as helping families enroll and access services for their students through Medi-Cal. To run smoothly and maximize funding eligibility, school districts require support from state agencies responsible for both health and education. AB 834 would strengthen the institutional partnership between the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and the CDE by creating an office within CDE to coordinate various health programs and services delivered through the schools. AB 834 would not alter the lead role that DHCS currently has in managing these reimbursement programs but would increase CDE’s ability to partner and support DHCS.

Other states have successfully drawn down federal funds to support the administrative costs of assistance to school districts participating in these reimbursement programs and California could do the same to support an Office of School-Based Health Programs. With the expanding ability to receive federal funds for school-based health services, there is an opportunity for the CDE to play a vital role with assisting districts that wish to participate and draw down federal funds.

Thank you for introducing AB 834 and we support this bill and school health services across the state.

Sincerely,

[Signature, Title of Individual Authorized to Represent Organization]

1. [As cited on kidsdata.org](http://www.kidsdata.org/topic/1803/school-health-services/table#fmt=2265&loc=2,127,347,331,348,336,171,321,345,357,332,324,362,337,327,364,356,217,353,328,354,323,352,320,339,334,365,343,367,344,355,366,368,265,349,361,4,273,59,370,326,341,338,350,342,329,325,359,363,340,335&tf=81&ch=1143,1144,1145,1146,1147,1148,1149), California Department of Education, California School Climate Survey (WestEd). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)