



JENNIFER KENT
Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

July 9, 2018

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
Senate Committee on Appropriations
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

ASSEMBLY BILL 1957 (AS AMENDED JUNE 18, 2018) – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Portantino:

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) must inform you of its opposition to Assembly Bill (AB) 1957, which has been referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. AB 1957 would authorize applicants for and recipients of benefits under California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Medi-Cal, CalFresh, or Cash Assistance Program for Aged, Blind, and Disabled Legal Immigrants to give or revoke permission to have communications and notices of action be sent via the United States Postal Service (USPS) only, electronically only or both electronically and via the USPS, within the capacity of the county, while also ensuring data and privacy safeguards.

DHCS agrees that updating the electronic communication process for public social services is critical to ensure the successful delivery of social services for all Californians. The California Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment, and Retention System and the Statewide Automated Welfare System have already implemented the provisions of AB 1957 related to Medi-Cal, specifically offering and storing the communication preferences for most application and annual renewal notices for the Medi-Cal program. In addition, for purposes of Medi-Cal eligibility determinations, pursuant to state and federal requirements, DHCS allows for the use of verifications, electronic or otherwise, obtained for CalFresh and CalWORKs programs to be used as a verification source for Medi-Cal.

However, DHCS directly administers specific Medi-Cal programs and program-related activities which deliver Medi-Cal Notices of Action and other program-related communications via USPS. These DHCS managed Medi-Cal programs and activities are not automated or designed to allow for electronic communication, nor do they offer and store communication preferences as required in the bill. AB 1957, as written, would

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be unrealistic to apply to all DHCS-administered Medi-Cal programs and would create indeterminate costs for DHCS to implement the electronic communication process for those programs it directly administers.

For these reasons, DHCS must oppose AB 1957.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 440-7500.

Sincerely,

o/s/by: CG

Carol Gallegos
Deputy Director

cc: The Honorable Marc Berman
Member of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 6011
Sacramento, CA 95814

Chair and Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Republican Caucus
Senate Floor Analysis

cc: CHHSA Legislative Unit
Department of Finance
GO Deputy Legislative Secretary