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May 11, 2023

The Honorable Lena Gonzalez
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7720
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 616 (Gonzalez) Sick days: paid sick days accrual and use – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Gonzalez,

The Health Officers Association of California (HOAC), which represents the physician health officers of California’s sixty-one city and county jurisdictions, supports your SB 616 which would increase workers’ paid sick leave to a minimum of seven days.

Health officers protect public health in their communities through disease prevention, emergency preparedness, health education and promotion, regulating environmental hazards, and advocating for programs that promote health equity. As we saw in the most recent pandemic, access to paid sick leave is essential in helping to prevent the spread of contagious disease and protect public health. Working while sick has significant impacts on one’s physical and mental health. Working while sick can create added stress due to concerns about infecting others, falling behind on work, or losing pay, and can cause workers to delay necessary medical care.

Paid sick leave is particularly important for women as they are more likely to be the primary caregivers for children and other family members. Without paid sick leave, women may have to choose between caring for their loved ones and earning a paycheck, which can lead to financial hardship and strain on their family relationships.

SB 616 will improve health and well-being, and prevent the spread of illness, presenteeism, exacerbated health problems, and financial strain. For these reasons, HOAC supports SB 616 and thanks you for introducing this important measure.

Sincerely,

Kat DeBurgh, MPH
Executive Director
Health Officers Association of California