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To: California Legislators

March 27, 2019

Re: SB 276, the elimination of physicians' right to determine medical exemptions for vaccines

The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons strongly opposes this proposal (SB 276) to require patients to submit to government-ordered medical treatments without informed consent, even when a physician certifies that a medical exemption is warranted.

The traditional ethic in the Oath of Hippocrates requires physicians to refrain from deliberately harming patients. The State of California is denying patients the protection of this code and is instead imposing on them the judgment of a government agency, the Department of Public Health. Unlike physicians, these officials have no accountability for harm that individual patients may suffer.

Vaccines are unavoidably unsafe, as recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court, and also by Congress in establishing the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. Most doctors nevertheless recommend many vaccines, as they believe the benefit *to the patient* exceeds the risk. The public health authorities, on the other hand, may impose their dictates on the presumption that the overall benefit *to the population, as they calculate it*, overrides individual rights or more than counterbalances any adverse effects that individuals may endure.

History shows that many serious adverse effects of medical intervention may be unrecognized for long periods of time. Bureaucracies are by nature glacially slow in updating their policies—especially when conflicts of interest occur. A mistaken policy can cause far more harm than errors by individuals. Thus, protecting individuals' freedom also protects the population, as individuals can adapt far more quickly to new information or circumstances.

We urge California lawmakers to protect individuals' right to choose their medical treatment, the ability of physicians to practice in accordance with long-established medical ethics, and the right of patients to benefit from the independent judgment of their physicians. Please reject the government overreach and intrusion into medical decisions that SB 276 embodies.

Respectfully yours,

Jane M. Orient, M.D.

Executive Director