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CHAIR: SELECT COMMITTEE ON
INCARCERATED WOMEN

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Eliminating cost-sharing for abortion services under health insurance plans

Dear Governor Newsom,

Thank you for your leadership and sound judgment of your administration to guide our state through the COVID-19 pandemic. I applaud your work to recognize sexual and reproductive care as essential and time-sensitive within California, as well as the actions that you have taken to protect access to healthcare for the state's vulnerable populations.

The pandemic has caused legislative and budget priorities to shift. Due to timing and the immediate need to address the impact that COVID-19 is having in California, I withdrew AB 1973, the Abortion Accessibility Act. AB 1973 would have addressed the financial barrier to abortion care that many people face when accessing abortion. The bill would have eliminated cost-sharing, including co-pays, deductibles and coinsurance for abortion services, which on average costs a patient \$500 at 10 weeks gestation. That cost rises significantly later in pregnancy. The median cost of an abortion at 20 weeks gestation is \$1,195. As women endeavor to accumulate the funds, the cost rises each day that they delay the procedure.

The need remains for affordable abortion access, especially during this pandemic, which forces Californians to face additional financial uncertainty and hardship. Copayments and out-of-pocket costs serve as obstacles to abortion and can hinder Californians from using their insurance coverage. This monetary barrier to health care disproportionately affects people of color, the LGBTQ community, young people and poor women, creating systemic health care disparities. COVID-19 already has demonstrated how pronounced those disparities are.

I respectfully urge you to eliminate cost-sharing for abortion services under health insurance plans. Access to the full scope of sexual and reproductive health, including abortion, is time-sensitive and essential. The barriers constructed by cost-sharing hinder access to health care in a time when it is most critical.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sydney Kamlager', written in a cursive style.

Assemblymember Sydney Kamlager, District 54

SKD: ae