



September 18, 2015

California Children's Services Redesign Stakeholders Advisory Board

Dear Advisory Board Member:

I am writing you to express my concern with a policy within the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) regarding the authorization of allied health care providers for children with special needs in our state of California. As you are aware the care provided to children requires the efforts of dedicated individuals with specialized training in the health and well-being of children. The care of children with special needs exemplifies this necessity and places an increasing burden on the state to have sufficient number of providers for our growing population. As the landscape of healthcare is changing, as delineated in the Affordable Care Act, we need to find creative ways to deliver high quality and compassionate care, especially to the most vulnerable of our population.

California Children's Services (CCS) is the state program which funds and provides the connection with these highly specialized physicians and trained health care providers, such as Advanced Nurse Practitioners. Nurse Practitioners provide an invaluable service to these children and families through their expertise, advanced education, and training. Currently, the DHCS only recognizes Pediatric Nurse Practitioner as an individual who may become a CCS authorized provider. This policy excludes a number of Family Nurse Practitioners with extensive training and experience in caring for children from participating as a CCS authorized provider. In an era where the gap between reduced number of primary care providers and increasing patient pool is ever widening this outdated and shortsighted policy only threatens the children of our great state. Many of these Family Nurse Practitioners work exclusively in one of our free standing Children's Hospitals and clearly have the necessary experience and expertise equivalent to their colleagues, Pediatric Nurse Practitioners. Furthermore they provide knowledge and expertise when pediatric patients and families transition to adult care providers making continuity of care seamless and cost effective.

I implore you to utilize your position to review and ultimately revise this policy to be inclusive of this work force of Family Nurse Practitioners to increase the depleted, over worked and understaffed group of CCS providers in the state of California. Thank you for your service to the people of California and for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. O'Brien MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large "K" and "O'Brien" followed by "MD" in a smaller, more distinct script.

Kevin C. O'Brien, MD, FAAP
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