The Honorable Jim Wood

Chair, Assembly Health Committee

California State Assembly

1020 N Street, Suite 390

Sacramento, CA 95814

*Transmitted Electronically*

**RE: SUPPORT for AB 659 (Aguiar-Curry): The Cancer Prevention Act**

Dear Chairman Wood,

I write to support AB 659, a bill that recommends students be vaccinated against the human papillomavirus (HPV) by the time they are in 8th grade when the vaccine is the most effective, and extends the reccomendation for HPV vaccination of students 26 years of age or younger prior to enrollment in a CSU, UC and CCC, but does not require school districts and Higher Education institutions to enforce or confirm vaccination status for entry. This bill also will guarantee that the HPV vaccine is completely covered for Californians by requiring all public and private health insurance programs cover the costs of vaccinating for HPV.

*[Insert Organization Blurb and Connection Here]*

HPV is the most common form of sexually transmitted infection. If left untreated, HPV can lead to difficulties conceiving or carrying a pregnancy to term, or infertility in both men and women. Later in life, HPV can cause cancer in both women and men. Every year, over 37,300 people across the United States are diagnosed with HPV-caused cancers and over 7,000 people die from these cancers.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC, and other respected medical organizations recommend the HPV vaccine for all genders, attributing its effectiveness in preventing nine variants of the virus, and more than 90 percent of HPV-related cancers. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that kids get the HPV vaccine between the ages of 9 and 12 years because the HPV vaccine is more effective if administered at an earlier age.

Despite massive educational campaigns to promote the HPV vaccine, vaccination rates in California’s young people are as a low 51%--well below the national goal of 80%. Further, many Californians face financial barriers to receiving the vaccine, leaving their reproductive health at risk.

By recommending vaccination, this bill will help notify and educate Californians at these vital ages when receiving the vaccine is most effective. Doing so will prevent the spread of HPV and give more Californians protection from cancers and other HPV-induced diseases.

This bill also will guarantee that the HPV vaccine is completely covered, regardless of health insurance status, by expanding coverage requirements for the HPV vaccine and expanding comprehensive clinical family planning services under the Family PACT Waiver Program to include the HPV vaccine for FDA approved patients.

I strongly urge you to make reproductive health equity, and AB 659, a priority.

For more information, feel free to contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,