



DIABETES AND  
OBESITY PROGRAM

May 11, 2015

The Honorable Phil Ting  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0019

**Re: AB 1321 (Ting) – Support**

Dear Assembly Member Ting:

The Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) Diabetes and Obesity Program supports AB 1321, which would establish the Nutrition Incentive Matching (NIM) Grant Program to maximize California's share of federal matching funds, improve the health of low-income Californians, and support California's farming communities and small business owners. CHLA frequently treats patients and serves children and their families with preventable, chronic disease. Currently, 1 in 5 kids who presents to CHLA with new diabetes has preventable type 2 diabetes. While we recommend that people eat a healthy diet, we have seen that a number of barriers, including lack of access to fresh, affordable, and palatable produce, prevent families from following through on this advice.

One of our projects helped to develop the Watts Healthy Farmers Market in South Los Angeles in partnership with Sustainable Economic Enterprises (SEE-LA) and Kaiser Permanente. This market has been able to expand access of fruits and vegetables for low income residents utilizing WIC (Women, Infants & Children) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), Senior FMNP and the new CalFresh/EBT program. In addition, in 2010, with funding and technical support from Roots of Change, SEE-LA implemented a "Market Match" Program, a healthy incentive program for low-income shoppers. This incentive program provided shoppers spending federal nutrition benefits with \$2 in Market Match funds for every \$5 they spent per market day, up to \$10 in matching funds. Since Market Match funds could only be spent to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, the program was effective at increasing affordability of fresh, local fruits and vegetables for low-income residents while benefiting the farmers and the local economy. Then in May 2014, in partnership with the Ecology Center and Hunger Action Los Angeles (HALA), SEE-LA was able to expand Market Match through the sponsorship of First 5 Los Angeles to match benefits dollar for dollar.

Additionally, CHLA started a farmers market in January 2014 on the hospital campus to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption of staff and patients. This market not only accepts EBT but is also making plans to incentivize fresh produce purchasing power with "Veggie Bucks" similar to the NIM program. We have seen firsthand how such



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matching benefits increase healthy food access and leads to healthier eating habits. AB 1321 will help Californians to live healthier lifestyles while saving the state in healthcare costs. For these reasons, the CHLA Diabetes and Obesity Program strongly supports AB 1321 and respectfully asks for your Aye vote on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Mittelman".

Steven Mittelman, MD, PhD  
Diabetes and Obesity Program Director  
Children's Hospital Los Angeles

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claudia Borzutzky".

Claudia Borzutzky, MD  
EMPOWER Weight Management Clinic Director  
Children's Hospital Los Angeles

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie Ruelas".

Valerie Ruelas, MSW  
Director of Community Advocacy for the Diabetes and Obesity Program  
Children's Hospital Los Angeles