



State of California

# LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION

August 5, 2016

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Carole D'Elia  
*Executive Director*

The Honorable Anthony Cannella  
Senator, California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 5082  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 1098**

Dear Senator Cannella:

The Little Hoover Commission supports Senate Bill 1098, the measure authored to create an evidence-based advisory group to guide Denti-Cal priorities and oversee policy decisions.

In its 2016 report, *Fixing Denti-Cal*, the Commission found the program lacks any sort of evidence-based advisory group that could support and guide the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Denti-Cal program. A common complaint that the Commission heard about Denti-Cal was DHCS' unilateral decision-making, where rule changes were often announced without fully seeking an understanding of the consequences. One such area with problems is dental surgery, where an August 2015 Denti-Cal rule change by DHCS caused great confusion, and ultimately ended up limiting access to dental surgery, directly impacting special needs children statewide. DHCS took this action despite outside input that the rule changes were unclear, and would be interpreted in a way that caused confusion.

The Commission concluded that the creation of an evidence-based advisory group would be the best way to assist DHCS in its rulemaking process, and made that recommendation in its report. Denti-Cal should be guided by an evidence-based advisory group, which consists of the state dental director and expert specialists who can weigh in on proposed decisions and make sure they are based on the best evidence and science and not merely on cost. This would be especially helpful to minimize the continual strife, confusion and even alleged harm to beneficiaries, including special needs populations. SB 1098 carries out this recommendation.

The Little Hoover Commission supports this common sense measure to improve Denti-Cal, and encourages a yes vote on SB 1098. If I or the Commission can provide any further assistance or expertise, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Carole D'Elia'.

Carole D'Elia  
Executive Director

c: Commissioners, Little Hoover Commission