



Officers

Muntu Davis, MD, MPH
President
Alameda County

April 3, 2018

Ken Cutler, MD, MPH
President-Elect
Nevada County

The Honorable Rudy Salas
State Capitol, Room 4016
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Vince Fong
State Capitol, Room 4144
Sacramento, CA 95814

Wilma Wooten, MD, MPH
Past President
San Diego County

RE: HOAC Opposes Assembly Bill 1787

Nicole Quick, MD, MPH
Treasurer
Yuba County

Dear Assemblymember Salas and Assemblymember Fong:

Eric Handler, MD, MPH
Secretary
Orange County

The Health Officers Association of California (HOAC), which represents the physician health officers of California's sixty-one city and county local health jurisdictions, opposes AB 1787 (Salas and Fong). While intended to standardize the Valley Fever reporting process, AB 1787 would do just the opposite for the disease reporting process as a whole. If approved, this measure would needlessly distinguish Valley Fever as the only disease with a date cemented in statute by which health officers are required to report aggregated case totals to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). HOAC is in opposition to AB 1787 because it proposes a disruption to the consistency of disease reporting standards and interferes with the way local health departments (LHDs) interface with CDPH.

Directors at Large

Joseph Iser, MD, DrPH, MSc
Yolo County (retired)

Bela T. Matyas, MD, MPH
Solano County

Cameron Kaiser, MD
Riverside County

Robert Oldham, MD, MSHA
Placer County

Claudia Jonah, MD
Kern County

Karen I. Relucio, MD
Napa County

Health officers oppose affixing a rigid reporting deadline in statute. CDPH is entrusted to establish a list of reportable diseases and specify reporting dates for aggregated case totals. Among other reasons, CDPH may require flexibility in setting an annual reporting deadline to accommodate emerging challenges, such as outbreaks, that significantly burden LHDs and demand urgent action. In addition, requirements set by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) determine when California must notify the CDC of cases for their annual publications. This affects when CDPH sets the deadline for LHDs.

Sara Cody, MD
Santa Clara County

Robert Benjamin, MD, MPH
City of Berkeley

The date by when health officers must provide aggregated case totals to CDPH can vary from one year to another without disease cases going unreported. Claims that AB 1787 is needed because inconsistent deadlines create confusion within LHDs and contribute to inaccurate Valley Fever case totals are misinformed. Disease reporting between LHDs and CDPH is continuous, performed throughout the year. The annual deadline, whether rolling or fixed, does not have an effect on the number of disease cases LHDs investigate, confirm, or report to CDPH. Some jurisdictions will always have provisional cases of Valley Fever and other diseases in their counts to CDPH, but regardless of when aggregated case totals are due, ongoing disease reporting allows LHDs to provide notice in real-time once provisional cases have been confirmed. This current process ensures data shared between LHDs and CDPH is as accurate, up-to-date, and accessible as possible.

Karen Milman, MD, MPH
Sonoma County

Staff

Kat DeBurgh, MPH
Executive Director

Dalia Navarro
Office Manager

Brandon Roberts
Legislative Assistant

In collaboration with LHDs, CDPH has convened a Valley Fever Workgroup tasked with developing recommendations to improve the surveillance of Valley Fever in California. If the Workgroup identifies challenges that can be mitigated by specifying a unique deadline to report aggregated Valley Fever case totals, they may recommend that CDPH consider doing so. Prior to the Workgroup's expert recommendations, the proposed change to Valley Fever reporting standards is premature. It is also unnecessary, as CDPH can determine a reporting date without requiring legislative intervention.

The health officers share your concern about Valley Fever. This disease has no known vaccine or cure, and it affects lives throughout the Central Valley and beyond. Valley Fever prevention should be a high priority for all of California. When cases cannot be prevented, early diagnosis can improve health outcomes for those affected. Let's work together toward these goals. AB 1787 does not forward these aims and will not help prevent additional cases of Valley Fever in this state.

For these reasons, HOAC must respectfully oppose AB 1787. Should you have any questions regarding our position on this measure, I invite you to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kat DeBurgh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kat DeBurgh, MPH
Executive Director