



Officers

Muntu Davis, MD, MPH
President
Alameda County

March 28, 2018

Ken Cutler, MD, MPH
President-Elect
Nevada County

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia
State Capitol, Room 2191
Sacramento, CA 95814

Wilma Wooten, MD, MPH
Past President
San Diego County

RE: HOAC Opposes Assembly Bill 626

Nicole Quick, MD, MPH
Treasurer
Yuba Country

Dear Assemblymember Garcia:

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 jurisdictions, opposes your AB 626. This bill would allow potentially hazardous foods prepared in home kitchens to be sold to the public. No matter how well-intentioned, home-cooked meals prepared for the public come with an increased risk of foodborne illness.

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

California's industry standards and current food safety laws protect the public by making sure any potentially hazardous foods are prepared by trained professionals in permitted, inspected, and sanitary conditions. Public health, like public safety, is a condition taken for granted by most Californians. When food is purchased by the public, they expect that it has been prepared within a legal framework that works to prevent pathogens. This bill instead allows meals to be prepared for sale in a home kitchen, where sanitary conditions cannot be guaranteed.

Sara Cody, MD
Santa Clara County

Robert Benjamin, MD, MPH
City of Berkeley

Karen Milman, MD, MPH
Sonoma County

We understand the need for microenterprise. Home cooks who wish to earn a living can do so under California's existing cottage food law, which allows them to prepare non-potentially hazardous foods for sale. AB 626 goes too far by broadening this law to allow potentially hazardous foods to be cooked in home kitchens and sold to the public. Potentially hazardous foods include those that must be maintained and cooked at specific temperatures to avoid spreading pathogens. There is no other law like this in the nation - other states' cottage food laws, like California's, allow only non-potentially hazardous foods to be sold by home cooks.

Staff

Kat DeBurgh, MPH
Executive Director

Dalia Navarro
Office Manager

Brandon Roberts
Legislative Assistant

Inspecting home kitchens goes beyond the scope and ability of local health departments. Unlike restaurant kitchens, home kitchens are in use throughout the day for other purposes, and may be host to friends, family, children, and

pets. Allowing potentially hazardous foods to be prepared in this environment poses too high a risk.

California already allows home cooks to prepare appropriate foods for sale. AB 626 broadens this law in a way that would put the public at risk. For these reasons, we must regretfully oppose this bill.

Should you have any questions regarding our position on this matter, 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