

June 24, 2023

The Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman
Chair, Senate Health Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3310
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 352 (Bauer-Kahan)- Health Information
Position: Support as amended in Assembly May 18, 2023**

Dear Senator Eggman,

The California Academy of Family Physicians, the largest primary care medical society in California, representing more than 10,000 Family Physicians, residents, and medical students, is pleased to support **Assembly Bill 352(Bauer-Kahan)** to improve patient and provider privacy by preventing information about sensitive services from being automatically shared in health information exchanges.

The California Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) supports women's access to comprehensive health services without fear of intimidation or violence. As an organization representing physicians that provide reproductive health services, we support every woman's right to access care and oppose policies that restrict access to comprehensive reproductive health care. It is pivotal that primary care providers are able to provide comprehensive health services to women in lieu of the overturning of Roe v. Wade which poses a threat to women's health everywhere.

In the summer of 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the long-standing legal protections for abortion under Roe v. Wade with its decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization. The decision has opened the door for states to ban and criminalize abortion services – impacting patients and providers across the U.S. Currently, 18 states have enacted a ban on abortion services or have severely restricted access to abortion. These efforts to restrict reproductive and abortion rights are intertwined with policies banning trans rights and gender-affirming care, which have been introduced in hostile states across the country.

These bans have caused patients to seek care wherever they can, in border states from their home state or traveling to California for care. While reproductive health services remain legal and accessible in California, there's now legitimate fear that

accessing or providing care can lead to civil or criminal penalties. To ensure patients feel safe accessing care and providers continue to be able to offer abortion services and other reproductive health services it is critical to protect information shared through health information exchange.

AB 352 will prevent information related to sexual health care, abortion, and other sensitive services from being automatically shared, especially outside of California, via health information exchange to providers in other states and will require authorization to view medical information related to sensitive services.

To continue to meet the needs of patients in California, we must ensure our laws and systems protect abortion providers and patients. In addition to the stigma that already persists around reproductive health care, there is a new layer of legal risk since states have begun criminalizing health care services. **AB 352(Bauer-Kahan)** will ensure that patients can feel confident accessing abortion in California, for these reasons we support AB 352 and respectfully request your "AYE" vote in Health Committee.

For questions or further information regarding our support for the bill, please contact CAFP Legislative Advocates Bryce Docherty at (916) 769-0573 or bdocherty@tdgstrategies.com or Tiyesha Watts at (415) 231-2139 or trwatts@familydocs.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tiyesha Watts', written over a horizontal line.

Tiyesha Watts

Legislative and Policy Advocate
California Academy of Family Physicians

CC: The Honorable Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Members of the Senate Health Committee