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May 8, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
1021 O Street, Suite 8220  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1975 (Bonta): Medi-Cal: medically supportive food and nutrition interventions.  
As Introduced – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 1975 by Assembly Member Mia Bonta. This measure would, subject to federal approval, make medically supportive food and nutrition interventions a covered benefit under Medi-Cal fee-for-service and managed care delivery systems.

Adequate food and nutrition are key to preventing and treating many health conditions, including preventable chronic conditions that disproportionately affect low-income communities and people of color. Healthy nutrition can significantly improve an individual's quality of life and reduce lifelong health care costs. Recognizing the important connection between nutrition and health outcomes, medically tailored meals and supportive food are included as one of 14 pre-approved Community Supports available through CalAIM. Over a 12-month reporting period between 2023-2024, medically tailored meals and supportive food was the most utilized Community Support, with nearly 40,450 Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan (MCP) members receiving this benefit. Despite the high utilization, not all MCPs offer medically tailored meals and supportive food as a Community Support and the federal approval to offer this benefit is currently only effective through December 31, 2026.

AB 1975 would permanently expand this benefit by adding medically supportive food and nutrition interventions as a covered Medi-Cal benefit if determined to be medically necessary by a health care provider or health plan. In addition, this measure requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to establish a stakeholder group to advise DHCS on the qualifying medical conditions for this benefit, rate setting, and other guidance on benefit design.

Counties are deeply invested in improving health outcomes and health equity for Californians. Counties also support preventative health interventions that reduce avoidable healthcare costs. AB 1975 will expand a highly utilized and cost-effective health benefit to all Medi-Cal recipients, reduce long-term healthcare spending, and advance health equity. It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 1975. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 591-5308 or [jonodera@counties.org](mailto:jonodera@counties.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jolie", with a long, horizontal, wavy line extending to the right.

Jolie Onodera  
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Mia Bonta, California State Assembly  
Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus