Date: August 11, 2014

To: Members of the California Legislature

Re: AB 357 (Pan)

The undersigned organizations are writing to strongly support the passage of AB 357 (Pan), which would rename the Healthy Families Advisory Panel as the Medi-Cal Children’s Health Advisory Panel and modify its scope and structure in accord with the panel’s move to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) following the transition of Healthy Families enrollees to Medi-Cal.

The Healthy Families Advisory Panel was a 15-member panel of stakeholders, including parents of children enrolled in Healthy Families, that advised the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB) on all policies, regulations, operations, and implementation of the Healthy Families Program; made recommendations that helped improve the quality of care for children in Healthy Families; and served as an important venue for parents of enrollees, providers, and other experts to discuss ways to improve the program.

In 2013, over 750,000 children were transferred from the Healthy Families Program to the Medi-Cal program. The legislation authorizing the transition of Healthy Families subscribers (AB 1494, Chapter 28, Statutes of 2012) also required a transfer of the Healthy Families Advisory Panel from MRMIB to DHCS. However, existing law (INS 12693.90), which defines the Healthy Families Advisory Panel, needs to be replaced with language that reflects the panel’s new location and purpose.

AB 357 would rename the Healthy Families Advisory Panel the Medi-Cal Children’s Health Advisory Panel; maintain a combination of enrollee representatives, providers, and other experts; move the body’s advisory capacity from MRMIB to DHCS; require DHCS to provide staff assistance to the advisory panel; and require a report be provided to the Legislature that would include any recommended changes needed for the advisory panel to better function within the changing landscape of the Medi-Cal program and its other stakeholder and advisory groups. We understand that DHCS is undertaking an effort to restructure stakeholder groups; this report would help ensure the panel fits into a revamped advisory system.

We strongly urge you to support AB 357 as a means to ensure that children and families have a strong voice in DHCS and a venue to address issues affecting children’s access to health care services in Medi-Cal.
CH1LDREN NOW

American Academy of Pediatrics
– California

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – L.A.
Autism Deserves Equal Coverage
Butte County Child Abuse Prevention Center

California Academy of Family Physicians
California Academy of Physician Assistants
California Coverage & Health Initiatives

California Federation of Teachers
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Medical Association