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Governor Brown Signs Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry's Bill to Bring Telepharmacy Healthcare into California

Sacramento, CA – Over the weekend, Governor Brown signed AB 401, authored by Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry, into law. This bill authorizes the use of "telepharmacy" health technology in California for the first time. Making pharmacists more readily available helps improve individuals' health and the health of entire communities that lack a pharmacist.

Today, prescription drugs can only be dispensed at licensed pharmacies. In more rural areas of California where there are no pharmacies or pharmacists, people have limited access to their medications. AB 401 will change this by allowing "remote dispensing pharmacies" to open and utilize telepharmacy in areas where there are no pharmacies within 10 miles.

Telepharmacy works by connecting a licensed pharmacist in one location to a remote dispensing pharmacy in another. The remote site is staffed by an advanced pharmacy technician, who is virtually supervised by the licensed pharmacist. Through telepharmacy software, patients receive live, interactive video counseling directly from the pharmacist when they pick up their prescriptions.

According to Aguiar-Curry, "Allowing telepharmacy to be used in parts of the state without convenient access to a pharmacy provides opportunities for better patient education, increased medication adherence, and improved overall health outcomes. I worked hard to ensure this bill promotes safe use of pharmaceuticals and accessibility for these areas of our state."

"The California Pharmacists Association was pleased to support AB 401," said Jon Roth, Chief Executive Officer of the California Pharmacists Association. "In the ever-changing healthcare arena where patient access to pharmacy services means healthier lives, pharmacists must adopt evolving technologies to reach people where they live. The ability for patients to remotely access pharmacist-directed care is essential to continuity of care and adherence to their medication."

The means to provide better access to a pharmacist and pharmaceutical care throughout California are available today. Other states have successfully implemented telepharmacy programs, which benefit thousands of underserved patients across the country. AB 401 will help patients in California to access the medications they need.

"I am excited that Governor Brown also sees the value that telepharmacy can provide in California," said Aguiar-Curry. "People living in pharmacy-deprived areas, whether rural or urban, face many barriers to obtaining comprehensive medical care. These people desire more convenient access to their health care services, and telepharmacy is a proven model to provide enhanced care that is both safe and effective."

Aguiar-Curry represents the 4th Assembly District, which includes all of Lake and Napa Counties, parts of Colusa, Solano and Sonoma Counties, and all of Yolo County except West Sacramento.

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