



May 11, 2020

The Honorable Jim Wood  
Chair, Assembly Health Committee  
State Capitol, Room 6005  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 2164 (Rivas): E-Consult Services and Telehealth Assistance Program – SUPPORT AS AMENDED**

Dear Assemblymember Wood:

On behalf of [Health Center Partners of Southern California](#), I respectfully urge you to **SUPPORT AB 2164 (Rivas) as amended when it comes before you in committee for a vote.**

[Health Center Partners of Southern California](#), a family of companies, includes a membership organization of 16 Federally Qualified Health Centers, Indian Health Services Organizations, both urban and sovereign, and Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, collectively serving 850,000+ patients each year or, 1 in 5 of the entire local population, for 3.6 million patient visits each year, at 140 practice sites across San Diego, Riverside, Imperial counties, with the seventh largest provider group in the region.

Today, roughly 1,370 Community Health Centers (CHCs) in California provide high-quality comprehensive care to 7.2 million people, or 1 in 6 Californians. CHCs serve the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, including 1 in 3 Medi-Cal beneficiaries. Because of their living situations, many CHC patients cannot physically access care at CHCs. Socioeconomic barriers, like the inability to take time off from work, or the lack of transportation or childcare, also prevent many patients from accessing vital care. Therefore, CHCs continuously look for ways to integrate technology into their practices and clinical workflows, to better serve their patients.

**Telehealth and Telephonic Care – Critical for CHCs and Their Patients**

To ensure continuity of care, CHCs provide telehealth in safe and effective ways to their patients, eliminating existing access issues (transportation, childcare, work schedules). The current COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing practices have proven how important telehealth is for CHCs and their patients. **Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, my members' telehealth and telephonic visits now account for on average 70% of all patient visits.**



**AB 2164 will enhance CHCs' ability to provide telehealth services.**

- It will create a grant program that supports the telehealth infrastructure necessary to implement an e-consult pilot program at certain CHCs, thereby improving access to care for underserved populations.
- It will clarify CHCs' ability to establish a patient through synchronous or asynchronous telehealth services, connecting patients to their local CHCs.
- It would improve access to CHC services for low-income and other marginalized populations by ensuring providers can deliver care using telehealth.

**For these reasons, Health Center Partners of Southern California is proud to SUPPORT AB 2164 (Rivas) as amended, and respectfully requests your AYE vote in the Assembly Health Committee.**

As always, thank you for your continued support. We stand ready to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Henry N. Tuttle".

Henry N. Tuttle  
President and CEO  
[htuttle@hcpsocal.org](mailto:htuttle@hcpsocal.org)

cc: Members of the Assembly Health Committee  
Assemblymember Robert Rivas  
Assemblymember Rudy Salas

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