



**AB 1992 – Improving Healthy Outcomes for
Low-Income Children
Fact Sheet
February 13, 2018**

SUMMARY

AB 1992 improves health access for low-income children by postponing financial penalties for families in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program who have not verified that their young children are vaccinated. This bill also provides critical support for these families to secure immunizations.

BACKGROUND

Current California law requires families receiving CalWORKs benefits to provide documentation that young children have the required immunizations. Families could opt out of immunizing their child if it has been medically determined that the child cannot be immunized or if the family files an affidavit claiming that their beliefs do not permit them to immunize their child. If they do not provide this documentation within 45 days, the family's grant is reduced by approximately \$130 per month until verification is submitted to the county.

PROBLEM

While the rationale for current policies has been that they will improve the health of a child, research has proven that the penalties do not help families secure recommended immunization for their young children. Immunization penalties for families receiving welfare do not correlate with higher immunization rates.

Contrary to the belief that children go unimmunized because their parents have made a conscious decision to do so, research shows that children living in deep poverty are more likely to go unimmunized than other children solely because their families are so desperately impoverished that they are disconnected from health services. Due to the serious health and public health implications of children not being immunized, the state should provide information and support to CalWORKs families rather than the current sanction policy that punishes poor families lacking access to health services.

SOLUTION

AB 1992 supports children and families in deep poverty by directing them to a source to secure timely immunization. It will result in healthy outcomes for children by accomplishing the following:

- Extending the time a family has to comply with the CalWORK immunization verification requirement from 45 days to 6 months.
- Ensuring that all families are informed of existing exemptions for vaccination.
- Providing CalWORK families crucial information and pathway to receive immunization for their child.

SUPPORT

Sponsors:

Western Center on Law and Poverty
California Coalition of Welfare Rights Organizations
Children's Defense Fund-California

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