



1970 Broadway, Suite 760
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April 6, 2020

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

RE: AB 3118 (Bonta) SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson Wood,

On behalf of California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA), I write to express our support for Assembly Bill 3118 by Assemblymember Bonta.

CFPA is a statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. We also work to improve access to the federal nutrition programs, and for more effective policy and programmatic alignment between health and nutrition programs. We believe that all Californians, regardless of individual circumstances, deserve access to resources that help them meet their most basic needs.

AB 3118 establishes medically supportive food as a Medi-Cal benefit. Medically supportive food is an effective medical intervention to prevent, reverse and manage chronic diseases that are diet related such as diabetes and hypertension. Heart disease and diabetes are underlying health conditions that increase the risk of serious complications related to COVID-19.

Medi-Cal beneficiaries with prediabetes, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, kidney disease and other conditions that can be reversed, prevented or managed through medically supportive food. Under AB 3118, DHCS will determine eligible participants and providers using Medi-Cal data.

AB 3118 will amplify the efficacy of the medically supportive food benefit by linking it to nutritional and behavioral supports which may include, but are not limited to, nutrition education, group medical visits, cooking education and behavioral coaching and counseling. This is not a new mandate benefit but is intended to complement the medically supportive food.



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There are a growing number of studies that demonstrate reduction in A1c (blood sugar) levels for prediabetic and diabetic patients, reduction in blood pressure and emergency department visits and hospitalizations. In Alameda County's Food as Medicine Initiative, patients with a variety of medical conditions ranging from hypertension, depression, anxiety, and obesity received weekly healthy food and behavioral and nutritional support for 16 weeks. Subgroup analysis on 49 of these patients showed a reduction in blood pressure by 16 points; an increase in fruit/vegetable intake by one (1) serving per day; a reduction in ER/hospitalizations by 77 percent; and a reduction of depression scores by 49 percent.¹

For these reasons, CFPA supports AB 3118 and urges your 'Aye' vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jared Call". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jared Call
California Food Policy Advocates

CC: Office of Assemblymember Rob Bonta

¹ Emmert-Aronson B., Grill K., Trivedi Z., Markle, E., Chen, S. (2019) "Group Medical Visit 2.0 10/2019 The Open Source Wellness Behavioral Pharmacy Model", The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, October 2019; Vol 25, Number 1026-1034.