

June 06, 2023

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN**

**Support for Assembly Bill 620: Health Care Coverage for Metabolic Disorders**

Inherited metabolic diseases are rare, genetic disorders resulting from a missing or defective enzyme in the body. Enzymes in the body are responsible for the breakdown of food and other chemicals as a part of the body's metabolic process. Inherited metabolic disorders are present at birth, and some are detected by routine screening. All 50 states screen newborns for phenylketonuria (PKU). Most states also test newborns for galactosemia. However, no state tests babies for all known inherited metabolic disorders. If an inherited metabolic disorder is not detected at birth, it is often not diagnosed until symptoms appear. Symptoms may be brought on by foods, medications, dehydration, minor illnesses, or other factors. Symptoms appear within a few weeks after birth in many conditions and other inherited metabolic disorders may take years for symptoms to develop.

Improved testing technology is leading many states to expand newborn screening for genetic metabolic disorders. Assembly Bill 620 (Connolly) seeks to expand existing law requiring every health care plan contract or disability insurance to cover the testing and treatment of PKU, to also cover the testing and treatment of other digestive and inherited metabolic disorders, on or after January 1, 2024. The bill would require coverage for treatment of chronic digestive diseases, including, but not limited to, Crohn's disease, and inherited

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metabolic disorders, to include formulas that are part of a diet prescribed by a licensed physician and managed by a health care professional. Providing health care coverage for the treatment of metabolic disorders will expand the impact of food safety net programs identified by the Los Angeles County Food Equity Roundtable and the Office of Food Equity.

Medically tailored meals delivered to individuals living with severe illness through a referral from a medical professional or healthcare plan are designed to improve health outcomes, lower cost of care and increase patient satisfaction. People living with serious illnesses benefit from eating foods that are specifically designed for their diagnosis. These meal plans address the additional complications that come with that illness including the treatment of side effects and comorbidities. Medically tailored meals help to promote health and nutrition for the sickest of the sick in our communities. Health care coverage for this type of treatment will also improve affordability, increase equitable access, and build market demand for the consumption for healthy food. Supporting this bill will enhance the long-term resilience and sustainability of the food system by improving food and nutrition security among the most vulnerable populations.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office's Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations branch to issue support for Assembly Bill 620 (Connolly) and authorize the County's Sacramento advocates to take the appropriate legislative advocacy actions to advance this effort.

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JH:nh