

July 27, 2010

The Honorable Felipe Fuentes  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 220 (Yee) – SUPPORT AS AMENDED JUNE 24, 2010**


Dear Assembly Member Fuentes:

On behalf of the California Healthcare Institute (CHI), the statewide public policy association representing our innovative life sciences sector – biotechnology, pharmaceutical, medical device and diagnostics companies, venture capital firms, research universities and institutes and its 275,000 workers – I am writing in support of SB 220, a bill that would require that health care service plans and insurers that provide outpatient prescription coverage to include smoking cessation products, as defined, in their formularies.

Smoking is still a prevalent public health concern in California. There are over four million smokers in the Golden State. Each year, 75 percent of those – over three million individuals – will attempt to quit smoking. Surveys have shown that, on average, former smokers who had at least five years of smoking cessation had attempted to quit more than six times before they were successful. Tobacco use costs the state over \$18 billion each year in health care costs and lost productivity. Surely we can do more to help Californians who would like to kick the habit.

CHI member companies are at the heart of the biomedical research and development that produce medications designed to ameliorate the often difficult withdrawal symptoms associated with smoking cessation. We have made remarkable progress in targeting specific causes of addiction, and have introduced many products to market that are designed help individuals end tobacco use. However, our member company treatments are only effective when patients have access to them. This measure will go to great lengths to ensure that patients have access treatments that will help them become non-smokers. For these reasons, CHI strongly supports SB 220.

Sincerely,



Sandra Pizarro  
Vice President – State Government Affairs

CC: Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
Assembly Republican Caucus