



The Patient's Advisory & Advocacy Group

June 4, 2004

(Via Facsimile – 916-324-0384 and 916-323-2263)

Honorable Senator Deborah Ortiz, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Regarding: AB 2136 (Goldberg)
Position: Support – Co-sponsor

Re: SUPPORT - AB 2136 (Goldberg) Access to Drug Treatment
Hearing scheduled for Wednesday, June 9, 2004

Dear Senator Ortiz:

The Patient Advisory & Advocacy Group (“PAAG”) is pleased to be a co-sponsor and to strongly support the above referenced legislation and we write to you as Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. The PAAG represents over 5,500 patients in substance abuse treatment within the Aegis Medical Systems group of companies with a mission to pursue the best interest of the opiate dependent patients and all other substance dependent patients or clients. We are joined in the co-sponsorship of this legislation by California Society of Addiction Medicine, California Opioid Maintenance Providers Association, Bi-Valley Medical Clinic group and Aegis Medical Systems Inc. The purpose of this important legislation is to improve treatment standards and accessibility, especially to indigent patients in California who do not qualify for Medi-Cal services.

AB 2136, as proposed to be amended, will:

1. Provide important training to jail personnel to understand and meet the *American Society of Addiction Medicine* guidelines for treatment of addiction withdrawal while incarcerated in local facilities and to assist them in complying with current law contained in Health and Safety Code Section 11222;
2. Clarify the lines of accountability and responsibility between the judiciary, treatment providers, and physicians regarding any decision to require a parolee to discontinue a legal prescription medication prescribed to treat an addiction to an illegal substance; and,
3. Codify clear, concise guidelines for sliding scale assessment of a patient’s ability to pay for a Narcotic Treatment Program (“NTP”) that will encourage the continual provision of those services by private companies to indigent patients.

AB 2136 proposes these important steps to improve the quality treatment and increase accessibility for patients. The PAAG is proud to be a co-sponsor of this important legislation.

Again, we wish to thank Assemblymember Goldberg for her willingness to introduce this important legislation and we encourage your committee to approve it so that it may hopefully become law and help guarantee access to this “gold standard” of medical treatment to those indigent patients who need this treatment but could not otherwise afford it. If you have questions regarding our support, please do not hesitate to contact me at 818-206- 0360 or visit our website @ www.aegispaag.com.

Sincerely yours,

PAAG Board Member