DATE, 2017

The Honorable Jim Wood

Chair, Assembly Health Committee

State Capitol, Room 6005

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 654 Incentive-Based, Supplemental Payments to Improve Access to Care for Children (Maienschein) – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Wood:

On behalf of my Son/Daughter, I’m writing to support AB 654 which will require the DHCS to establish an incentive-based, supplement payment program for home health agencies that treat children who are receiving continuous nursing care or private duty nursing services at home through the Medi-Cal program.

In-home skilled nursing care allows children with complex and severe long term health needs to spend significantly less time in ICU-level hospitals, and more time receiving their health care from the comfort of their homes for a fraction of the cost to the state. However over the last 10 years accessing quality in-home nursing care has become increasingly more difficult. This is due to out-of-date reimbursement models, which haven’t increased in nearly 17 years, and difficulty recruiting nurses with the appropriate skill level. As a result, pediatric patients in need of shift nursing services are kept in the hospital longer, return to the ER departments more frequently, are placed on local waiting lists, or simply received no in-home nursing options at all.

The Medi-Cal pay rates are significantly less than what surrounding states pay, and more than 60% below the average commercial rate. This has resulted in home health agencies not accepting Medi-Cal patients or not being able to fill nursing shifts that have been approved by our doctor and the state.

AB 654 would create an innovative program that increases payments to HHAs if they can improve access and care for children. It further encourages the DHCS to improve access by considering a supplement payment based on acuity of patient and the completion of hard to fill nursing shifts, such as nights and weekends.

Please support AB 654. Our family is counting on in-home nursing services to care for our child.

Sincerely,

Name and Address

cc: Assemblymember Brian Maienschein

**Instructions for sending letter:**

If *mailing*, please send to:

The Honorable Jim Wood, Chair

Assembly Health Committee

State Capitol, Room 6005

Sacramento, CA 95814

If *emailing*, please send to:

The Honorable Jim Wood: assemblymember.wood@assembly.ca.gov and cc The Honorable Brian Maienschein at assemblymember.maienschein@assembly.ca.gov