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County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

March 9, 2016

The Honorable Bill Dodd
California State Assembly
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1655 (Dodd) – As introduced 1/13/16 – **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblyman Dodd:

The County of San Bernardino is pleased to support AB 1655, legislation that would increase the personal and incidental needs payment from $35 to $80 per month for a person in a medical institution, nursing facility, or for a person receiving institutional or non-institutional services from a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) organization. This bill would also require the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to annually increase this payment based on the California Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The personal and incidental needs payment for institutionalized Medi-Cal beneficiaries has remained at $35 since 1985; however, the inflation rate over the same time period has increased by 128%. The $35 allowance is intended to cover incidentals such as clothing, shoes, socks, undergarments, hair styling, snacks or entertainment needs.

Existing law requires DHCS to establish income levels for maintenance needs at the lowest levels that reasonably permits a medically-needy individual to meet his or her basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter, and for which federal financial participation will still be provided under applicable federal law.

In over 30 years, the state has not increased the personal and incidental needs amount or revised the calculation methodology. At $35 per month, individuals living in long term care facilities are unable to meet their basic incidental needs, further diminishing their independence, thus decreasing their quality of life.

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For the above reasons, the County of San Bernardino supports AB 1655. If you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcounty.gov.

Sincerely,

JAMES RAMOS
Board of Supervisors Chairman
Third District Supervisor
County of San Bernardino

c: Honorable Members and Consultants, Assembly Health Committee
County of San Bernardino Legislative Delegation