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Amidst Dual Public Health Crises of COVID 19 and Racial Inequity, the California State PTA Adopts Resolution to Support Healthier Communities for Kids and Families

OAKLAND, CA – California State PTA has joined with over 50 counties, school boards and organizations across the state to say that it’s time to start investing in building healthier schools and communities. Sustained funding for preventing injuries and chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes that start early in life, could keep people from needing care in the first place, make health care dollars go further and improve lives. The California Alliance for Prevention Funding, a coalition of 20 statewide organizations, worked with the California PTA to craft the resolution.

While good quality health care is essential for all Californians, COVID 19 has uncovered the consequences of not investing in prevention. In this pandemic, those with underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and cardiovascular disease have greater risk of complications from COVID 19. Furthermore, communities of color, which have more chronic disease, more essential workers and more crowded housing are seeing higher rates of exposure to and death from COVID 19.

“California children who grow up in poverty, especially disproportionately impacted children of color, are more likely to suffer from chronic diseases and to have increased risk for chronic health conditions into adulthood,” says Celia Jaffe, President of the California State PTA. “Preventable disease such as obesity, pre-diabetes and asthma are at epidemic levels with an estimated 39% of Californians suffering from at least one chronic condition, yet investment in prevention is inadequate.”

Shauna Olsen from the Bancroft Middle School PTA and the California Alliance for Prevention Funding spoke in favor of the resolution. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” she said. “We must invest in proven public health practices such as increasing access to healthy food and physical activity, creating safer communities, providing opportunities for youth development and other strategies. With

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sustained funding we can reduce health inequities, prevent disease and improve the lives of children and families. “

California State PTA has long supported the right of every child to have access to the tools they need for a healthy life. At their virtual convention this week, delegates voted to support a resolution advocating for increased funding for chronic disease and injury prevention. The resolution calls on PTA groups across the state to:

- Educate school districts, parents and residents of the state about the harm preventable childhood illnesses and health inequities are causing California children.
- Advocate for legislation that provides sustained funding for chronic disease and injury prevention.
- Promote partnering with public health agencies, nonprofit and community organizations to advocate for prevention funding.

*The **California State PTA** connects families, schools and communities. We are part of the foundation of our public-education system and a trusted messenger to millions of members, parents, families, educators and allied agencies throughout the state. PTA is the nation’s largest volunteer-led child-advocacy association working to drive improvements in the education, health and well-being of all children and families. For more information: www.capta.org.*

*The **California Alliance for Prevention Funding**, a program of the Public Health Institute, is a coalition of 20 statewide organizations advocating for the creation of a California Wellness Trust to improve health equity and invest in chronic disease and injury prevention. For more information: www.ca-allianceforpreventionfunding.org*

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