

PLACE ON ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD

- Please submit letters by **MARCH 18th** via the portal: <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/>.
- Please also send a copy of your letter to Craig Pulsipher: cpulsipher@apla.org.

March **XX**, 2020

Senator Richard Pan
Chair, Senate Health Committee
State Capitol, Room 2191
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 932 (Wiener) Rapid STI Testing – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Pan:

XXXXXX strongly supports SB 932, which would allow HIV counselors to perform rapid testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), in addition to the HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) rapid tests they are already authorized to perform. The bill would also allow HIV counselors to receive HIV counseling training through a training course that has been certified by the Office of AIDS. SB 932 is a critical measure to address the state's growing STI epidemic and increase the number of individuals who receive testing and treatment.

[INSERT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION]

According to the California Department of Public Health, STIs are at their highest levels in 30 years and new infection rates continue to climb. STI cases are increasing across all regions of the state with the highest increases among young people, African Americans, and gay and bisexual men. In addition, the number of infants born with congenital syphilis increased for the sixth consecutive year. There were 22 stillbirths or neonatal deaths associated with congenital syphilis in 2018.

HIV counselors should be fully utilized to combat increasing rates of STIs. Unfortunately, existing law prohibits HIV counselors from performing skin punctures in order to obtain blood for rapid STI tests. The current scope of practice for HIV counselors allows them to conduct finger stick specimen collection for rapid HIV and HCV testing, but there is no such exception for rapid STI testing. SB 932 would remove an unnecessary barrier to rapid STI testing by allowing HIV test counselors to also perform skin punctures for rapid STI tests. HIV counselors should be a one-stop-shop to help address the state's interrelated epidemics of HIV, HCV, and STIs.

HIV counselors are already subject to stringent training requirements, including how to administer rapid tests and in universal infection control precautions. SB 932 would expand the availability or training by allowing HIV counselors to be trained through a training course that has been certified by the Office of AIDS.

Allowing HIV counselors to administer rapid STI testing would significantly increase the number of individuals who receive testing and treatment, and decrease the risk of further transmission stemming from undiagnosed infections. For these reasons, **XXXXXX** strongly supports SB 932 and respectfully requests your "aye" vote.

Sincerely,
XXXXXX