



UNION OF AMERICAN PHYSICIANS AND DENTISTS
AFFILIATED WITH AFSCME, AFL-CIO

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R. DOUGLAS CHIAPPETTA, M.A.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

UAPD Letter of Support

June 6th, 2023

Re: Paid family leave and gap coverage for short term disability for County physicians.

Ventura County employs in its service the most mission driven employees I have had the honor to work with. From the temporary seasonal workers to the most tenured administrator, I can proudly say as a resident in Ventura County that the people who work for our local government are and continue to be THE most dedicated public servants. Among those dedicated workers are the Doctors who provide care to our clinics located across our great County. Officially the Doctors are the newest group to join the ranks of public service through the ambulatory care integration that took place in 2021. However, these mission driven physicians have always served our community's most vulnerable populations. Through fires, floods, and the global pandemic our county's healers who are awarded for excellence in healthcare, won grants for funding our safety net services, and everyday make the difference between having a healthy community, have been there for all of us.

With the integration of clinical operations there were oversights and missteps on both sides of the table. I remember meeting with the former CEO and current Assistant CEO of Ventura County expressing the UAPD's concern about oversights and the rough start. The response I received was "Bryan don't worry, we have great relationships with our labor partners and if there is a need to make adjustments, we will do what's right."

Due to tax reviews in the Spring of 2022, the UAPD and its members discovered one of those oversights. Short term disability coverage through California's EDD was no longer being deducted from doctors pay as it had been in prior years. This meant that the doctors after a certain amount of time would lose a benefit almost every Californian receives and that is funded by the employees themselves with no substantial cost from the employer. The UAPD alerted the proper chain of command with the County Ambulatory Care Department and worked with EDD to determine what was needed to remedy the situation before a loss in coverage occurred. Those efforts halted when we provided our petition for deductions to the appropriate parties in the County government. We were told that the County had "no obligation to agree to SDI deductions" and would "consider" SDI while they explored other options. Instead, a benefit paid for by employees would be used as leverage for other items that were actively being discussed at the negotiating table. Coverage lapsed due to the delay and there is now a gap. Doctors now receive no help when they themselves are sick or need to care for their family.

UAPD and County negotiators would finally come to terms including SDI as of November 2022. The amendment however would not reach this board to be approved until January of 2023 and deductions would not take effect until April of 2023 which dramatically increases the gap in coverage until October of this year. This gap in coverage was raised through the chain of command again. The response was that gap coverage for employees would only be discussed if it were tied to other on-going negotiations at the table and not as a separate matter.



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History has come full circle and to be honest the way that this was handled the first time was wrong. To hold ransom an employee paid benefit against a group of public servants, who everyday care for others is not a way to celebrate and attract more mission driven employees. The UAPD is here to today to support its members who have been negatively affected. We know Ventura County appreciates its workforce. We ask that you hear their experience and seriously consider doing what's right by our dedicated and beloved doctors.

Respectfully,

Bryan D. Toledano
Ventura County UAPD Representative