



August 7, 2019

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 3086
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1544 (Gipson): Community Paramedicine or Triage to Alternate Destination Act
As Amended July 11, 2019 – OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED
Set for Hearing on August 12, 2019 – Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Portantino:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties of California (UCC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), representing all 58 of California's counties, and the County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC) representing local health departments throughout the state, have adopted an OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED position on Assembly Member Mike Gipson's Assembly Bill 1544. While counties are supportive of community paramedicine and alternate transport, AB 1544 weakens local control of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) systems and incorporates unnecessary constraints on the community medicine and alternate destination program structure.

Advance Life Support Designation. AB 1544 requires that if the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) establishes a community paramedicine or triage to alternative destination program, it must allow a public agency, such as city fire departments, the first right of refusal to operate such a program. AB 1544 would allow any public agency to become a community paramedicine or triage to alternative destination provider. However, there is a distinction between public agencies that are designated as basic life support and advanced life support. The advance life support (ALS) designation means the public agency has paramedics approved to practice within a higher scope in their employment. Because the bill is about community paramedicine, we request that the right of first refusal be granted only to public agencies who are designated to provide advanced life support. Our suggested language is as follows:

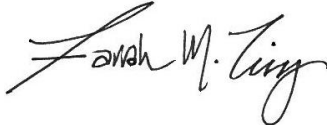
(1) Provide a first right of refusal to the public agency or agencies **designated as advanced life support** within the jurisdiction of the proposed program area to provide the proposed program specialties. If the public agency or agencies agree to provide the proposed program specialties, the local EMS agency shall review and approve any written agreements necessary to implement the program with those public agencies.

Protecting .201 Rights. Furthermore, recognizing the intent to protect the rights for local public emergency services agencies under HSC §1797.201, found in §1855 of AB 1544, we request that the bill's language mirror the existing language already present in HSC §1797.224. The existing language in Section 1797.224 was added to ensure the same protections, is consistent with current law, and does not risk redefining those often-controversial rights.

Counties continue to support alternate destination and triage programs, many of which may also help our members in their efforts to combat homelessness, improve the health and behavioral health of residents, and improve community health by providing the appropriate level of services to the appropriate individuals in the appropriate setting. While we also appreciate Assembly Member Gipson's attention to our concerns and ongoing conversations, the July 11 has not addressed all of our concerns.

CSAC, UCC, RCRC, and CHEAC will continue to work with Assembly Member Gipson and the bill's sponsors to address our significant concerns and ensure a cohesive and safe local EMS system in each of our counties. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Farrah McDaid Ting
Legislative Representative
California State Association of
Counties (CSAC)



Kelly Lindsey-Brooks
Legislative Representative
Urban Counties of California (UCC)



Tracy Rhine
Legislative Advocate
Rural County Representatives of
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Michelle Gibbons
Executive Director
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California (CHEAC)

cc: The Honorable Mike Gipson, Member, California State Assembly
The Honorable Todd Gloria, Member, California State Assembly
The Honorable Robert Hertzberg, Senator, California State Senate
The Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Tam Ma, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
Marjorie Swartz, Policy Consultant, Office of Pro tem Atkins
Samantha Lui, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Jennifer Lim, Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs, Emergency Medical Services
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Christy Bouma, California Professional Firefighters
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Adriana Ruelas, Steinberg Institute