



July 2, 2019

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 2032
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1544 (Gipson): Community Paramedicine or Triage to Alternate Destination Act
As Amended June 25, 2019 – OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED
Set for Hearing on July 9, 2019 – Senate Judiciary Committee**

Dear Senator Jackson:

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.

Hospice Care. Additionally, we are requesting that hospice be removed entirely from the community paramedicine construct in the bill. Under current law, if a hospice patient or their family calls 9-1-1, paramedics may treat the individual and do not have to transport the individual to a hospital. If AB 1544 were to become law as currently written, we believe that a county would have to have a community paramedicine program in place to continue what is

current practice under the law today for hospice patients – treating and preserving the patient's wish to remain in their home. We think it is inefficient and inhumane to require transport to the hospital, and understand that this is a unintended consequence of the bill. For these reasons, we are requesting hospice be removed entirely.

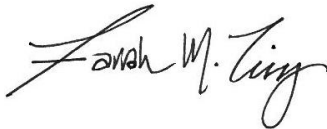
Protecting .201 Rights. Furthermore, recognizing the intent to protect the rights for local public emergency services agencies under HSC §1797.201, found in §1855 of AB 1544, we request that the bill's language mirror the existing language already present in HSC §1797.224. The existing language in Section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

Recent Amendments. Recent amendments do help clarify the definition of mental health facilities and sobering centers, which will help ensure patient safety and proper care. However, another amendment requiring the local EMS agency to *ensure* the transfer of medical records causes us concerns and we request that the language instead require the local EMS agency to establish a policy requiring the medical facility to transfer medical records.

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 June 25th amendments only address some 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,



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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 Judiciary Committee
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