

September 9, 2025

CHA Position: **Neutral on AB 1312**

To: The Honorable Members of the California State Assembly

From: Vanessa Gonzalez, Vice President, State Advocacy

AB 1312 (Schiavo) — Neutral

California is a national leader in protecting low-income, uninsured, and underinsured residents from potentially devastating medical bills. Its hospitals are proud to have provided more than \$2.5 billion in charity care and discounted payments, including debt forgiveness to patients.

Assembly Bill (AB) 1312 would require California hospitals to screen patients for charity care and discount payment eligibility, as well as provide financial assistance to qualified patients upon verification.

The California Hospital Association (CHA), on behalf of nearly 400 hospitals and health systems, remains committed to supporting policies that improve access and equity in care. At the same time, with more than half of California hospitals operating at a financial deficit and all hospitals facing historic cuts to Medicare and Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California), any expansion of financial assistance policies must be both sustainable and targeted to those most in need.

Hospitals appreciate the productive discussions with the author's office and sponsor, as well as the most recent amendments to AB 1312 — which would allow hospitals to screen patients for Medi-Cal eligibility and verify income before sending a final bill to the patient rather than prior to discharge. This means hospitals can ensure the process is accurate and compliant without delaying patient care or discharge, and patients are more likely to access the financial assistance they qualify for.

For these reasons, CHA is NEUTRAL on AB 1312.