



March 17, 2026

The Honorable Mike Fong
Chair, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 2301 (Soria) – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Fong:

Nothing is more critical to providing high-quality patient care than a strong workforce. Hospitals see firsthand the challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified health care professionals, driven in part by students' challenges in accessing the education needed to further their careers.

The California Hospital Association (CHA), on behalf of nearly 400 hospitals and health systems, supports Assembly Bill (AB) 2301, which would require the chancellor of the California Community Colleges to develop a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program at 10 select community college districts statewide.

California's health care workforce crisis is only growing, with the [National Center for Health Workforce](#) projecting that by 2038, the state will be short more than 84,750 full-time nurses — the largest nursing shortage in the U.S. and a sharp increase from previous projections of 65,000 full-time nurses by 2037. Nurses are often patients' primary point of contact, providing not just clinical care but also information, compassion, and more. They are integral to providing high-quality care, and a shortage of this magnitude would severely impact patient care statewide.

By expanding baccalaureate degrees in nursing to community colleges, AB 2301 would empower more students to pursue higher education in nursing, helping to meet the demand for highly qualified nurses in health care settings. Many hospitals prefer that nurses hold baccalaureate degrees, as this helps hospitals meet accreditation and quality standards; the education that AB 2301 would make possible opens more doors for graduates, increasing their opportunities for jobs and career advancement.

Community colleges play a vital role in providing accessible and quality postsecondary education, particularly for students facing financial, geographical, and logistical challenges. They also serve a more diverse student population, which would help the nursing workforce better reflect its community — an important step toward better patient care and improved outcomes.

This bill is an innovative solution for addressing California's health care workforce shortage and ultimately will help ensure health care services are staffed and available to patients across the state.

For these reasons, CHA requests your "AYE" vote on AB 2301.

Sincerely,



Vanessa Gonzalez

Vice President, State Advocacy

cc: The Honorable Esmeralda Soria
The Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Higher Education
Kevin Powers, Consultant, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
Lyndsay Mitchell, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus