



March 21, 2025

The Honorable Mia Bonta
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1020 N Street, Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 416 (Krell) – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Bonta,

Every day, as many as 1 in 5 patients visiting California hospital emergency departments need treatment for behavioral health conditions. Given the growing number of individuals seeking care for behavioral health, the California Hospital Association (CHA) supports efforts to ensure hospitals have the tools they need so they can care for all patients.

That’s why the CHA, on behalf of more than 400 hospitals and health systems, supports Assembly Bill (AB) 416, which would authorize trained emergency department (ED) physicians to hold individuals in the ED if they are a danger to themselves or others, or if they are gravely disabled, so they can receive appropriate evaluation and treatment.

While California’s lack of inpatient psychiatric beds is a major factor driving lengthier stays in EDs for patients awaiting crisis care, another important factor is the unavailability of county-designated professionals permitted to initiate an involuntary hold for patients who may qualify.

Under the Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act, each county mental health director has the authority to determine which professionals (in addition to peace officers) they wish to “designate” as having the weighty ability to place an individual on an involuntary psychiatric hold. Each county also has the ability to determine the qualifications and training of these individuals. While some counties permit local hospital ED physicians and other staff to obtain this authority, many have limited their eligibility to county employees or community-based agencies.

AB 416 would simply give ED physicians a pathway to be trained and authorized by the county mental health director. Under the bill, ED physicians would need to participate in and successfully complete their local county’s required training to then be authorized to place an individual on an involuntary psychiatric hold.

Most patients with behavioral health needs who present to hospital EDs do not need to be placed on involuntary holds to facilitate treatment. However, in the case of individuals who may need to be

protected — through the LPS Act involuntary detention process — from harming themselves or others, hospital ED physicians should have the ability to become trained and designated so they can fully and timely meet their patients' needs.

For these reasons, **CHA supports AB 416.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Leah Barros', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Leah Barros
Consulting Lobbyist, California Hospital Association

cc: The Honorable Maggie Krell
The Honorable Members of the Assembly Health Committee
Logan Hess, Consultant, Assembly Health Committee
Justin Boman, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus