



April 3, 2025

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

SUBJECT: AB 669 (Haney) – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Bonta:

Hospitals are on the front lines of the mental health and substance use disorder crisis in California, with as many as one in three inpatient hospitalizations and one in five emergency department (ED) visits now [involving patients with behavioral health disorders](#). When timely access to medically necessary care is delayed or denied, patients suffer, and medical outcomes are compromised. Too often, these harmful delays and denials stem from the process known as prior authorization. Thoughtful, comprehensive reform is essential to ensure that Californians receive the care they need when they need it. Given the growing number of individuals seeking behavioral health treatment, the California Hospital Association (CHA) supports efforts to ensure patients can access the immediate care they need without delay.

For these reasons, CHA, on behalf of more than 400 hospitals and health systems, supports Assembly Bill (AB) 669, which would require health plans to cover a variety of substance use disorder treatment services without requiring prior authorization.

Every day, thousands of California hospital patients are prevented from transferring to appropriate settings where the resources, expertise, and trained staff are prepared to meet their needs. When CHA surveyed its members in 2023, hospitals [reported](#) they provided 7.5 million hours of unnecessary ED care and 200,000 days of unnecessary inpatient psychiatric care each year due to discharge and transfer delays. Many of these patients are individuals boarding in a hospital ED who are awaiting an available behavioral health transfer, or patients who completed inpatient psychiatric care to stabilize a crisis but are awaiting transfer to substance use disorder treatment. The dominant insurer-related factor contributing to these problems is authorization delays and denials.

AB 669 would save lives by requiring health plans to cover medically necessary prescription drugs, outpatient services, and the first 28 days of inpatient, intensive outpatient, or partial hospitalization treatment for substance use disorders without prior authorization. The bill specifies a concurrent review and appeal process for inpatient substance use treatment that lasts longer than 28 days.

For these reasons, CHA requests your “AYE” vote on AB 669.

Sincerely,



Kalyn Dean
Vice President, State Advocacy, California Hospital Association

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