



April 24, 2025

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

**SUBJECT: AB 849 (Soria) – OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED**

Dear Assemblymember Bonta:

California hospitals are deeply committed to ensuring that both patients and staff feel safe, respected, and supported during their care. As part of this commitment, hospitals provide medical chaperones for sensitive examinations when possible, with their individual policies and available resources.

Unfortunately, Assembly Bill (AB) 849 would eliminate this necessary flexibility, instead creating a new staffing mandate that would be extremely difficult for hospitals to fulfill. **The California Hospital Association (CHA), representing more than 400 hospitals and health systems, must respectfully oppose AB 849 unless it is amended.**

AB 849 would require medical providers, including hospitals, to inform patients that a medical chaperone is available upon request for sensitive examinations performed by a sonographer. CHA appreciates the author's willingness to collaborate to address several concerns, and hospitals fully share the goal of protecting patients' dignity and safety during intimate examinations. However, AB 849, as currently drafted, still presents staffing and operational challenges.

Every day, hospitals navigate providing patient care while experiencing staffing shortages. Hospitals that currently provide medical chaperones rely on flexibility to offer patients an alternative if a chaperone is unavailable due to staffing limitations. In those instances, hospitals work with the patient to develop a solution that respects the patient's preferences and is operationally feasible.

This new staffing requirement would increase costs at a time when affordability remains a top priority. With hospitals already under financial strain and bracing for likely Medicare and Medi-Cal cuts, added costs could further jeopardize hospitals' ability to provide access to high-quality care.

CHA remains committed to continuing to work with the author to find a path forward that protects patients while allowing hospitals to adjust to staffing limitations without disrupting patient care.

**For these reasons, CHA is opposed to AB 849 unless it is amended to address these concerns.**

Sincerely,

*Vanessa Gonzalez*

Vanessa Gonzalez

Vice President, State Advocacy

cc: The Honorable Esmeralda Soria  
The Honorable Members of the Assembly Health Committee  
Lara Flynn, Principal Consultant, Assembly Health Committee  
Justin Boman, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus