**Hospitals Strive to Protect Workers and Care for Communities**

*Extending workers’ compensation presumptions will jeopardize access to care*

**Hospitals share the goal of protecting injured or ill employees.**

* Hospitals value their employees and prioritize their well-being. Without healthy employees, hospitals could not fulfill their mission of care.
* Hospitals comply with Cal/OSHA standards aimed at preventing hazards in the workplace, including — but not limited to — musculoskeletal injuries, cancers, PTSD, respiratory illnesses, and infectious diseases such as COVID-19.
* Despite hospitals’ best efforts, work-related injuries do occur. When that happens, hospitals accept the vast majority of workers’ compensation claims, with a robust appeal process in place for any denied claims.

**Senate Bill (SB) 213 would create a presumption for acute care hospital employees, without any evidence of widespread or wrongful denial of benefits for workers injured on the job.**

* This bill would establish a presumption for hospital employees who experience any infectious disease, musculoskeletal injury, cancer, PTSD, and respiratory illness, while extending indefinitely a presumption for COVID-19.
* There is no scientific basis supporting the proposed presumptions. In fact, recentstudies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that MRSA infections among hospital patients are declining, while community-acquired infections for all individuals are on the rise. And any justification for COVID-19 presumptions created for all industries last year is diminishing as health care workers are prioritized for vaccinations and have access to personal protective equipment, herd immunity should be achieved before the Jan. 1, 2023, sunset date, and the economy is re-opening.
* There *is* evidence that the current process works for health care employees. In fact, health care employers have one of the lowest denial rates of any industry, including public safety. In 2019, denial rates for health care ranged from 7.7% to 9.3%, while public safety/government ranged from 13.8% to 18.3%.

**SB 213 would unnecessarily jeopardize access to care at a time when hospitals are laser-focused on caring for their communities and helping make health care more affordable.**

* A presumption in workers’ compensation can result in hundreds of thousands of dollars in temporary and permanent disability and medical costs for a single case, with little to no evidence the injury occurred at work.
* These increases in workers’ compensation costs will directly and immediately impact hospitals’ financial ability to protect access to high-quality care, especially considering that 39% of hospitals already operate in the red.