Modernizing California’s Hospital Disaster Preparedness Standards — The Future of Care Delivery in the Bay Area Hangs in the Balance

As Bay Area hospitals recover from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, they face a looming building standards mandate that will divert billions of dollars from patient and community investments. After decades of work and billions already spent to make California hospitals the gold standard for structural safety, hospitals are well-prepared to respond to earthquakes or other disasters. Now, it is time for lawmakers to focus on the future of care delivery by prioritizing policies that ensure ongoing emergency services and provide hospitals time to recover from the pandemic.

Every year, at hospitals in the Bay Area:

- **584,912** Inpatient stays
- **2.2 million** ED visits
- **84,498** Births
- **287,688** Directly employed and ‘ripple effect’ jobs
- **26%** Medi-Cal enrollees as a % of total population
- **$70.6 billion** Total economic output
- **39%** of hospitals operate in the red
- More than **$10 billion** in losses, even after federal CARES Act funding (2020-21)

Community priorities Bay Area hospitals would like to invest in:

- Expansion of behavioral health prevention programs
- Expansion of medical respite services
- Digital infrastructure to support telehealth and other remote care capabilities
- Workforce training and retention programs for nurses and allied health professionals
- Reduction of carbon footprint through energy retrofits
- Partnerships to address homelessness and housing insecurity
- Collaborative initiatives to reduce health disparities among diverse populations

To be better prepared for future disasters, hospitals say the Bay Area needs:

- Advanced detection and care for infectious diseases
- Improved patient transportation services and evacuation capabilities
- Enhanced emergency communications capabilities
- Expanded EMS resources

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