



April 4, 2022

The Honorable Jim Wood, DDS
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1020 N St., Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 2092 (Weber) — Co-Sponsor

Dear Assemblymember Wood:

The California Hospital Association (CHA) is dedicated to the provision of high-quality, safe, and person-centered care, and to the development of innovative patient care models that improve care access and patient outcomes and experience. **With these priorities in mind, CHA is proud to co-sponsor Assembly Bill (AB) 2092, which would require the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to approve a hospital's implementation of Acute Hospital Care at Home when certain conditions are met.** These changes are needed to align state law with federal regulations, and to ensure that California's residents have access to hospital services that best meet their needs.

In November 2020, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched the current Acute Hospital Care at Home initiative to provide hospitals and health systems with greater flexibility to ensure the continued delivery of safe and effective care in our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. By waiving certain requirements using a provider-specific approval process, the initiative allowed qualified patients the opportunity to receive care in their homes while maximizing inpatient bed capacity at hospitals and limiting potential COVID-19 exposure for practitioners and non-COVID-19 patients.

Hospitals seeking to provide Acute Hospital Care at Home must receive prior approval from CMS by demonstrating their ability to meet a number of requirements for critical components of hospital care. This includes patient eligibility criteria, frequency of on-site and virtual clinical visits, and patient and caregiver communication with the medical team. Hospitals interested in providing Acute Hospital Care at Home must receive prior approval from CMS and must demonstrate how they will meet these requirements for patients in their homes. CMS has also established a regular reporting process to ensure that the quality of patient care and outcomes are not adversely affected.

California hospitals must meet state licensure requirements for general acute care hospitals in Division 2 of the California Health and Safety Code, and Title 22 CCR Division 5, Chapter 1, and receive program flexibility from CDPH for any requirement that will be met using an alternative method. However, current Title 22 requirements do not reflect current patient care needs, technologies, or hospital operations, and do not accommodate new innovative programs such as Acute Hospital Care at Home.

Changes are needed to ensure that California's residents have access to the full range of established medical services to meet their needs.

Acute Hospital Care at Home programs established during the public health emergency (PHE) have demonstrated their ability to provide safe and effective care while maintaining optimal outcomes and high patient satisfaction. For example, one CHA member was among the first health systems in the country to receive CMS approval for Acute Hospital Care at Home and has been operating this program in six hospitals throughout the state since early in the pandemic. This health system reports that, between May 2020 and December 2021, it cared for more than 1,000 patients, while reducing 30-day re-admission rates and maintaining high patient satisfaction.

California hospitals' experiences with the Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver have provided a unique opportunity to demonstrate that at-home hospital care can be a reliable and impactful way to deliver effective care and a meaningful part of the continuum of patient care. As we prepare to move beyond the current PHE, the continued operation of Acute Hospital Care at Home will contribute to an essential transformation of patient care.

For the reasons noted above, CHA requests an "AYE" vote on AB 2092.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Scott
Senior Vice President, State Relations and Advocacy

cc: The Honorable Akilah Weber, M.D.
The Honorable Members of the Assembly Health Committee
Scott Bain, Consultant, Assembly Health Committee
Gino Folchi, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus