

Key Messages

Modernizing California's Hospital Disaster Preparedness Standards – The Future of Care Delivery Hangs in the Balance

The Hospital Disaster Preparedness plan will focus on the future of care delivery by prioritizing policies that ensure ongoing emergency services and provide hospitals time to recover from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan will help ensure that:

- Every hospital building can withstand a major earthquake, providing the most comprehensive safety measures to protect patients and health care workers alike.
- Essential emergency care services can continue to be available to any community struck by earthquake or other disaster.

The plan also will provide opportunities for hospitals to address top community health priorities, including:

- Workforce training and retention programs for nurses and allied health professionals
- Expansion of behavioral health prevention and treatment programs
- Digital infrastructure to support telehealth and other remote care capabilities
- Expansion of outpatient and ambulatory care services
- Collaborative initiatives to reduce health disparities among diverse populations

By contrast, failure to modernize the law will mean fewer and outdated health care services for California.

- Without passage of California's hospital preparedness plan, communities throughout the state will face a significant shortage of resources as tens of billions of dollars are directed to unnecessary brick and mortar projects vs. actual improvement to our health care system. This will lead to:
 - Fewer resources for health care worker training and retention
 - A prolonged and more acute shortage of qualified health care workers
 - Aging and outdated medical technology
 - Insufficient diagnostic tools to detect disease and injury early
 - Hospital closures and cutbacks in hospital services

California must draw on the lessons of COVID-19 to prepare for future emergencies and disasters.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that hospitals can quickly mobilize to execute emergency plans and create flexible approaches to care for patients with the greatest needs during a disaster. During the pandemic, hospitals rapidly converted spaces to create triage units and increase ICU capacity, redeployed staff, transported critical supplies to those areas hardest hit, postponed non-emergency procedures, and brought in additional resources, including staffing, to care for critically ill patients.

- This response reinforced the fact that emergencies often demand rapid resource deployment where and when needed to provide life-saving care, all while redirecting non-emergency care to surrounding communities or delaying non-emergency care until after a crisis.
- We must draw from these lessons as we prepare for future emergencies. California's health care system is under tremendous strain due to the pandemic. California hospitals alone have lost more than \$10 billion over the past two years, even after federal CARES Act funding. It will take hospitals years to fully recover from the devastating impacts of the pandemic.

Let's create a health care system that delivers care for all in need.

- The Hospital Disaster Preparedness Plan will give hospitals the necessary time and flexibility to ensure that emergency services will be available to all Californians when the next disaster occurs, while also prioritizing investments that will build the health care delivery system of tomorrow.