



March 17, 2023

The Honorable Marc Berman
Chair, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
1021 O St., Room 6130
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 1557 (Flora) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Berman:

There is no greater priority for California’s hospitals and their pharmacists than the safety of patients. This means that every non-emergency medication ordered for a patient who has been admitted to a hospital is reviewed by a pharmacist prior to administration to avoid medication errors.

The California Hospital Association, on behalf of its more than 400 hospitals and health systems, supports Assembly Bill (AB) 1557, which would make permanent the authority for a state-licensed pharmacist to conduct medication reviews outside of a California licensed hospital.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services requires a pharmacist review of all non-emergency medication orders prior to administration to patients. However, many rural hospitals do not have a pharmacist on site during all hours of operations, which could delay medication administration.

Also, during patient surges and unanticipated employee leave, on-site pharmacists may be insufficient to perform all necessary services, including compounding preparations, medication therapy reviews, and other duties while also conducting timely reviews of medication orders. Advancements in technology over the last few decades — along with waivers provided by the state Board of Pharmacy due to the COVID-19 pandemic — have enabled hospital pharmacists to remotely review and process medications and today millions of new orders are reviewed and processed off site prior to patient administration.

The waiver that allows hospitals to remotely process prescriptions is set to expire on May 28, 2023, and the passage of AB 1557 is urgently needed so hospitals can continue to use this proven and safe practice. The flexibility permitted under AB 1557 would help ensure that every new non-emergency medication for patients in California hospitals has been carefully reviewed by a pharmacist.

AB 1557’s straightforward approach ensures continuity of patient care while providing flexibility to hospitals in determining how best to manage medication reviews for patients. **For these reasons, CHA respectfully requests your “AYE” vote on AB 1557.**

If you have any questions, please contact me at vgonzalez@calhospital.org.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Gonzalez

Vanessa Gonzalez

Vice President, State Advocacy

cc: The Honorable Heath Flora
The Honorable Members of the Assembly Business and Professions Committee
Vince Chee, Consultant, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
Bill Lewis, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus