



March 10, 2023

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

SUBJECT: AB 869 (Wood) — Support If Amended

Dear Assembly Member Wood:

While California’s hospitals have already spent billions to strengthen their buildings so they will be able to withstand powerful earthquakes, they must still meet a 2030 deadline that requires them to spend tens of billions more to be *fully operational* after an earthquake. This deadline will force many hospitals to close if they are unable to comply. Assembly Bill (AB) 869 would provide much-needed relief for some of the rural and district hospitals most challenged in meeting these seismic requirements. However, it is also critical that the Legislature protects the same access to care for every community whose hospitals are unable to meet the 2030 deadline. **For these reasons, the California Hospital Association, on behalf of more than 400 hospitals and health systems, supports, if amended, AB 869.**

Nearly all California hospitals have spent the last decade retrofitting their buildings to prevent collapse after a major earthquake. The need for relief from the 2030 *fully operational* mandate is widespread and critical. More than 3 out of 5 (63%) California hospitals (more than 260) have not met the 2030 seismic requirements. Given the financial losses spurred by the pandemic (\$12 billion through 2021 alone), unprecedented inflation in the cost of delivering health care, and the long-term workforce shortage, many hospitals will not make it to 2030 or beyond unless the law changes.

We applaud this bill in granting extensions to hospitals in some of California’s most vulnerable communities. As the state saw with the closure of Madera County’s only hospital in January, the health of any community is at grave risk when its hospitals are at risk. People who are in car accidents, have heart attacks and strokes, and need to give birth must travel great distances to receive care when a local hospital closes. While AB 869 would safeguard those life-saving services for some communities, a solution is still needed for the many communities whose hospitals are not accounted for in this bill.

For these reasons, CHA respectfully requests your “AYE” vote on AB 869 if it is amended.

The Honorable Jim Wood, DDS
March 10, 2023

Sincerely,



Kathryn Austin Scott
Senior Vice President, State Relations and Advocacy

cc: The Honorable Members of the Assembly Health Committee
Angela Pontes, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Governor's Office
Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, Health and Human Services Agency
Elizabeth Landsberg, Director, Department of Health Care Access and Information
Gino Folchi, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus