



July 31, 2023

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 1695 (Gipson) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino:

California is in the midst of a health care workforce crisis. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state faced a structural shortage of trained health care employees, including nurses. According to a recent study by the University of California, San Francisco that analyzes the preliminary data from the 2020 Survey of California Registered Nurses and final data from the 2019-20 Annual RN Schools Survey, California is estimated to have a current shortage of 40,567 full-time equivalent registered nurses (RNs), a 13.6% gap that is projected to persist until 2026. Specifically, the study indicates older registered nurses in California have left the field and a large number plan on retiring or quitting within the next two years. Meanwhile, unemployment among younger RNs in California has increased. Workforce shortages disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities, particularly in rural areas and in the Central Valley.

Referencing the Annual RN Schools Survey, there continues to be record-breaking interest in the nursing profession, with RN education enrollments projected to surpass pre-pandemic levels. Assembly Bill (AB) 1695 would help address the nursing shortage by incentivizing high school students to earn credits sooner, thereby enabling them to complete their degree and embark on their professional career sooner. Community colleges play an important role in training our future health workforce. We recognize the significant General Fund investment required to support the pilot program and advocate this investment will yield an increase in the number of nurses ready to practice throughout California.

This bill would positively impact the shortage of nurses by reducing the barriers to enrolling in community college nursing programs. Approximately 60% of newly licensed registered nurses still enter practice with an associate degree or diploma in nursing, with a high percentage continuing on to complete an RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. AB 1695 would address the nursing shortage crisis by increasing enrollment in community college nursing programs and helping California train and retain more nurses at all levels.

The California Hospital Association and its more than 400 hospital and health system members thank Assembly Member Mike Gipson for his leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Rony Berdugo
Vice President, State Advocacy

cc: The Honorable Mike Gipson
The Honorable Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Lenin Del Castillo, Principal Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Amanda Richie, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus