



September 13, 2023

The Honorable Jacqui Irwin
State Capitol, Room 6220
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 531 (Irwin) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Irwin:

Given the vast and growing unmet need for behavioral health and housing support in California, the California Hospital Association (CHA) supports all efforts to build a robust continuum of community-based care for Californians living with a serious mental illness or emotional disturbance. That's why CHA, on behalf of more than 400 hospitals and health systems, is pleased to support your Assembly Bill (AB) 531, the Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act of 2023. AB 531 would place a \$6.38 billion general obligation bond on the March 2024 primary ballot to fund an array of treatment, residential care settings, and supportive housing for individuals with behavioral health needs.

CHA supports AB 531 because of the important investment it would make to address the gaps in California's behavioral health continuum. In particular, AB 531 would provide over \$4 billion to continue California's efforts under the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) to build as many as 10,000 new housing units and treatment beds so desperately needed in our state. BHCIP provides funds to cities, counties, tribal organizations, community providers, and hospitals to support infrastructure growth in everything from clinics and mobile teams to hospitals and stabilization centers for people in an acute crisis.

Recently, the RAND Corp. published a rigorous and objective study of the demand versus supply of psychiatric inpatient, subacute, and community residential beds for California's adult population. It found that statewide, California has a shortfall of approximately 1,971 psychiatric beds at the acute level, 2,796 beds at the subacute level, and 2,963 community residential beds.

We appreciate your leadership on these important issues. I may be reached at Leah@LeahBarros.com or (916) 521-6878 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leah Barros", written over a thin horizontal line.

Leah Barros
Consulting Lobbyist, California Hospital Association

cc: The Honorable Members of the Senate
Judith Babcock, Principal Consultant, Assembly Health Committee

Reyes Diaz, Principal Consultant, Senate Health Committee
Marjorie Swartz, Policy Consultant, Office of Senate Pro Tempore Atkins
Rosielyn Pulmano, Health Policy Consultant, Office of Assembly Speaker Rivas
Joe Parra, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Justin Boman, Policy Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Jessica Devencenzi, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
Angela Pontes, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health & Human Services Agency
Stephanie Welch, Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health, California Health & Human Services Agency