



April 12, 2024

The Honorable Mia Bonta
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1020 N St., Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 2960 (Lee) – OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED

Dear Assembly Member Bonta:

Maintaining quality of care and safety for patients and staff is a guiding principle for all California hospitals 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Hospitals' commitment to high-quality patient care requires working in partnership with other providers and organizations across the continuum to ensure the most appropriate care for Californians — in the right place and at the right time, by the right provider.

The California Hospital Association (CHA), on behalf of more than 400 hospital and health system members, opposes Assembly Bill (AB) 2960 (Lee, D-Milpitas), unless it is amended to remove emergency departments (EDs) from the requirement to annually offer a syphilis test to all patients who can become pregnant.

AB 2960 would require primary care clinics and hospital EDs to, at least once a year, offer a syphilis test to all patients who can become pregnant. AB 2960 stems from the commendable desire to control and prevent the spread of syphilis — hospitals support that goal but disagree on where the testing should be provided.

An ED's primary role and mission is providing **emergency care**. Timely triage, treatment, and care for those most in need must be the ED's priority if it is to save lives and protect against unexpected emergent consequences.

Currently, California law and California Department of Public Health guidelines require that all pregnant people be screened and tested for syphilis at their first prenatal visit and potentially retested at delivery if they are at high risk for syphilis or live in areas with high rates of syphilis. These screenings and tests should take place in the primary care setting, not in emergency care.

The additional time required to provide non-emergent care would amplify the already overcrowded conditions that occur due to the extraordinary demands placed on EDs. It would outpace EDs' capacity and severely compromise their ability to perform essential emergency care functions. In addition, such an

impaction within the ED not only affects the department, but also increases ambulance offload delay pressures in the pre-hospital emergency services sector, straining their ability to save lives.

For these reasons, CHA and its more than 400 hospital and health system members respectfully request your “NO” vote on AB 2960 unless it is amended.

Sincerely,



Vanessa Gonzalez
Vice President, State Advocacy

cc: The Honorable Alex Lee
The Honorable Members of the Assembly Health Committee
Lara Flynn, Consultant Assembly Health Committee
Justin Bowman, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus