June 13, 2024

The Honorable Mia Bonta
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1021 O St., Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: SB 963 (Ashby) — SUPPORT

Human trafficking is a grave violation of basic human rights. It does not discriminate by age, race, ethnicity, nationality, or gender, and has lifelong and devastating implications for the physical, sexual, and psychological health of victims. This issue is important to hospitals because trafficking victims are treated for acute injuries and illnesses in emergency departments more often than in other health care settings.

This is why the California Hospital Association, on behalf of more than 400 hospitals and health systems, supports Senate Bill (SB) 963 (Ashby, D-Sacramento). California hospitals are committed to ensuring patients have a safe and discreet means of informing clinical staff they are victims of human trafficking or domestic violence. Many hospitals already have well-developed policies and protocols in place to identify and provide patients with resources, much like those required in SB 963.

This bill will build upon existing programs and strengthen the ability of all emergency departments to support victims and empower them to self-identify safely, without fear of consequences.

Licensed emergency personnel maintain a high level of knowledge when evaluating patients who appear to be at risk for abuse and/or violence. They are well-positioned to provide help and information about local services and resources for those who self-identify as victims of human trafficking or domestic violence.

For these reasons, CHA respectfully requests your "AYE" vote on SB 963 and thanks the author for leadership on this important issue. If you have any questions, please contact me at vgonzalez@calhospital.org.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Gonzalez

Vanessa Gonzalez
Vice President, State Advocacy

cc: The Honorable Angelique Ashby
        The Honorable Members of the Assembly Health Committee
        Lara Flynn, Consultant Assembly Health Committee
        Justin Boman, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Corporate members: Hospital Council – Northern and Central California, Hospital Association of Southern California, and Hospital Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties