



July 17, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 3059 (Weber) – Support

Dear Senator Caballero:

California hospitals acquire donor milk from any one of three milk banks across the state as the optimal nutrition source for hospitalized very low-birth-weight babies. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends donor milk if the mother is not able to provide sufficient breast milk. The donated breast milk is processed, pasteurized, tested by the milk bank, and sold to hospitals and families.

The California Hospital Association (CHA), on behalf of more than 400 hospitals and health systems, supports Assembly Bill (AB) 3059 (Weber, D-La Mesa), as it ensures coverage by commercial insurance of donor milk for these vulnerable infants.

Donor milk is a covered benefit under Medi-Cal, but existing law does not clearly define it as a covered benefit under commercial plans. With minor costs to the state, AB 3059 would ensure that all commercial plans provide coverage for medically necessary donor milk.

Additionally, AB 3059 would exempt hospitals from having to obtain a tissue bank license to distribute donor milk to infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). About 12 percent of NICUs in California do not use donor milk, and one hinderance to establishing a program is the requirement that hospitals obtain a tissue bank license to distribute the pasteurized donor milk. This process is redundant given current milk bank tissue licensing and pasteurization requirements. By removing this barrier, AB 3059 would set California on a path of achieving 100% donor milk in hospital NICUs.

For these reasons, CHA urges your support of AB 3059.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vanessa Gonzalez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vanessa Gonzalez

Vice President, State Advocacy

cc: The Honorable Akilah Weber, M.D.
The Honorable Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Agnes Lee, Consultant Senate Appropriations Committee
Joe Conaghan and Joe Parra, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus