



September 30, 2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, Governor's Office  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: AB 1494 (Aguilar-Curry) Medi-Cal: telehealth: state of emergency – Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the members of the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (CAPH) and the millions of patients they serve, I am writing to request your signature on AB 1494. This bill would help California clinics ensure that communities continue to receive timely access to care when disaster strikes.

As you know, California's 21 public health care systems are the core of the state's health care safety net, delivering high-quality care to more than 2.85 million patients annually, regardless of ability to pay or insurance status. Most patients seen in public health care systems are either Medi-Cal beneficiaries or remain uninsured. Statewide we provide nearly 30 and 40 percent of hospital care to the state's Medi-Cal and uninsured populations, respectively, and provide over 10 million outpatient visits each year. Public health care systems also operate half of the state's top-level trauma and burn centers, and train half of all physicians in the state. They also serve hundreds of thousands of Californians as their chosen source for primary, specialty, and hospital care. To a large extent, their patient population has complex and multiple medical needs. Filling their significant and multiple roles, public health care systems have a profound impact on the health care and health of millions of Californians.

The 2018 fire season was the worst in California history and took a devastating toll on impacted communities. In addition to fire fighters, police officers, and government officials who have worked together to coordinate relief efforts for fire-affected areas, primary care clinics have been treating nonemergency patients, providing resources to victims of the fires, and serving communities as they rebuild. In the immediate aftermath, they extended hours to treat their established patients as well as fire evacuees. Even those clinics directly impacted by the fires continued to go above and beyond to assist their community.

What we learned from this experience is that we need more clarity in state law to guarantee that providers may continue to provide services by utilizing alternative methods to connect with their patients that have been impacted by a declared emergency. This bill seeks to ensure that communities

continue to receive timely access to care when disaster strikes by allowing providers to have telephonic appointments, provide care for patients in-home and at shelters.

For these reasons, we request your signature on AB 1494. We would be pleased to further discuss our position with you and answer any questions you may have. Please contact Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, our Sacramento representative, at 916-272-0011 if you would like to follow-up. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sarah Hesketh", written in a cursive style.

Sarah Hesketh  
Senior Vice President of External Affairs  
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cc: The Honorable Cecilia Aguilar-Curry  
Tam Ma, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Daphne Hunt, Deputy Secretary of Legislative Affairs, California Health and Human Services Agency  
Carol Gallegos, Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs, California Department of Health Care Services  
Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, Hurst Brooks Espinosa