



March 11, 2022

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health and Human Services
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support – 2022-23 January Budget Care Economy Workforce Package

Dear Chair Arambula,

On behalf of the members of the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems and the millions of patients they serve, I am writing to voice our support of the \$1.7 billion investment proposed in the Governor's January 2022-23 budget for the care economy workforce development package, which is desperately needed to help rebuild California's health care workforce.

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 3.7 million patients annually, regardless of ability to pay or insurance status. Public health care systems include both county-operated or -affiliated facilities, as well as the five University of California medical centers. Statewide, public health care systems employ 85,000 workers, provide nearly 40 percent of all hospital care to persons who are uninsured, and 35 percent of all hospital care to persons covered by the Medi-Cal program in the communities they serve. Public health care systems also operate over half of the state's top-level trauma and burn centers and train half of all physicians in the state.

As you know, our health care workforce is in an extreme crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused trauma, stress, exhaustion and burnout for health care workers, causing many to retire early, seek non-patient care roles, or switch professions altogether. While the effects of the pandemic on the health care workforce are still unfolding, some early estimates have tried to quantify the impact. A national survey found that nearly 20% of health care workers have resigned from their job since February of 2020, and of workers who have stayed, 30% have considered, or are considering leaving their jobs. Specific to registered nurses, a recent UCSF report found that California is estimated to have a gap of about 40,000 nurses currently, which is projected to not close until 2026. Another report found that California needs to add about 500,000 new allied health care professionals such as medical assistants, imaging specialists, and other non-nursing staff by 2024 to meet demand.

At the ground-level, public health care systems have reported significant shortages in positions across their systems, including nurses, medical assistants, respiratory therapists, clinical lab scientists and technicians, pharmacy technicians, surgical technicians, radiology technicians, environmental and food service workers, physicians and mid-level practitioners, and psychiatric and behavioral health providers, among others. Public health care systems are also major teaching hospitals/systems. Many systems operate a wide range of in-house training programs, provide on-the-job-training, and/or partner with local educational institutions and other hospitals on training programs. These programs include training for physician and pharmacy residents, nurses, medical assistants, operating and radiology technicians,

community health workers, and others. Public health care systems are also eager to expand existing programs and develop new types of training and pipeline programs in their communities.

However, significant state-level investments will be needed to support efforts like these, and to help address the dire health care workforce crisis we are experiencing today across the state. The Governor's January Budget proposes \$1.7 billion in funding over three years that would go towards a number of critically needed areas, including nursing initiatives (\$270 million), psychiatric provider training programs (\$120 million), community health workers (\$350 million), and social work training programs (\$210 million), among other programs/provider types. The Administration's package also includes a strong economic development/mobility and career advancement focus through funding proposed for the High Road Training Partnerships program (\$340 million) and the Healthcare Workforce Advancement Fund (\$90 million). Finally, and importantly, the package would also support greater equity and diversity of our health care workforce by allocating funding (\$60 million) for scholarships and loan repayment for multilingual health care workers and social workers, support health careers for English language learners (\$130 million), and provide funding (\$3 million) for the Health Workforce Education and Training Council to research health care shortages and best practices and strategies to build a diverse, culturally competent workforce.

We support the care economy funding proposed in the Governor's January Budget and we look forward to working with the Administration and the Legislature to inform these proposals as they develop further. 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 916-753-0844 if you would like to follow-up. Thank you for your consideration and leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Sarah Hesketh
Senior Vice President of External Affairs
shesketh@caph.org

cc:

The Honorable Members of Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Andrea Margolis, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Eric Dietz, Consultant, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Tam Ma, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Elizabeth Landsberg, Director, Department of Health Care Access and Information
Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, Hurst Brooks Espinosa