



April 19, 2023

The Honorable Mike Fong  
California State Assembly  
1020 N Street, Room 173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: AB 689 (Carrillo) – SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Fong,

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 express our support for AB 689. This bill would provide health care employees with priority registration when enrolling in community college courses, which would help address our state's health care workforce crisis.

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 and affiliated facilities, as well as the five University of California medical centers. Statewide, public health care systems employ 85,000 workers, provide nearly half of all hospital care to persons who are uninsured, and provide 40 percent of all hospital care to the Medi-Cal population in the communities they serve.

As you know, our health care workforce continues to be 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. Public health care systems continue to face significant workforce challenges, which were exacerbated and compounded by the pandemic. Systems are struggling to retain workers and fill positions across the delivery system, including registered nurses, certified nursing assistants and medical assistants, clinical lab scientists and technicians, respiratory therapists, behavioral health providers, and others.

AB 689 would help enable workforce retention by providing health care employees with priority registration when enrolling in community college courses. Additionally, this bill would require that community colleges reserve at least 15% of the open slots for impacted courses for health care workers, which would ensure they have access to the classes they need to complete their training. Community colleges play an important role in training our future health workforce. By giving current health care workers priority access to courses, we can help grow our health workforce pipeline.

For these reasons, we support AB 689. If you have any questions regarding our position on this bill, please contact Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, our Sacramento representative, at 916-272-0011. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erica B. Murray', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erica B. Murray  
President and CEO  
California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems

cc: The Honorable Wendy Carrillo  
The Honorable Members of the Assembly Higher Education Committee  
Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy, Consultant, Assembly Higher Education Committee  
Lyndsay Mitchell, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus  
Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, Hurst Brooks Espinosa