



August 22, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
1021 O Street, Suite 9000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Request for Signature – AB 1557 (Flora)**

Dear Governor Newsom:

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 request your signature on AB 1557 (Flora). This bill would make permanent the authority for a California-licensed pharmacist to conduct medication reviews remotely for a California-licensed hospital.

California's 21 public health care systems, which include county-operated and affiliated facilities and the five University of California medical centers, 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 play an outsized role in caring for at-risk communities. Although they represent just six percent of all California hospitals, public health care systems provide 35% of all Medi-Cal and uninsured hospital care statewide. Public health care systems also provide a range of comprehensive services and train nearly half of all new doctors in hospitals across the state.

Under current federal law, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires a pharmacist to review all non-emergency medication orders before administration to patients. However, due to patient surges and workforce challenges, on-site pharmacists may not always be available, which could delay medication administration. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the California Board of Pharmacy issued a waiver of the Pharmacy Law, authorizing the off-site review of medications. Public health care systems have utilized this waiver to efficiently and safely review and process medication orders off-site prior to patient administration. This waiver expired this month, and AB 1557 is urgently needed so that public health care systems can continue to utilize this efficient and safe practice.

By continuing the flexibility to review medications remotely, AB 1557 would allow pharmacists to efficiently and safely review and process medication orders off-site before patient administration and help support public health care systems' efforts to ensure that their patients can access needed medications.

For the reasons described above, we support AB 1557. 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,



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

cc: The Honorable Heath Flora  
Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, Hurst Brooks Espinosa  
Sam Miller, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom