



June 10, 2026

The Honorable Lola Smallwood-Cuevas
Chair, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1582 (Ortega) - OPPOSE

Dear Chair Smallwood-Cuevas:

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 express our respectful opposition of AB 1582 because it could undermine public hospital systems' ability to provide accessible, high-quality patient care to vulnerable Californians. Existing agreements already provide enforceable consequences for violations and reflect years of collective bargaining and operational experience.

California's 17 public hospital systems, which include county-operated and affiliated facilities and the five University of California health systems, are the core of the state's health care safety net. County public hospital systems have a mission and mandate to deliver high-quality care to all, regardless of ability to pay or insurance status, across a comprehensive range of services. Despite representing only 6% of all hospitals statewide, public hospital systems provide 35% of all Medi-Cal and uninsured hospital care. They contribute over \$4 billion annually to the Medi-Cal program, in place of the state's share, with many of their payments uniquely tied to quality and performance improvements.

Our members play a central role in the state's health care safety net and serve patients with some of the most complex medical and social needs in California. These hospital systems must retain the flexibility to respond quickly to staffing shortages, patient surges, operational disruptions, and changing care demands in order to maintain continuity of care and access to critical services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, California's public hospital systems relied on flexibility, rapid deployment of personnel, and operational adaptability to expand capacity, protect patients and staff, and maintain access to care for vulnerable communities. AB 1582 risks undermining that operational flexibility by creating uncertainty around whether UC medical centers may secure temporary support services during emergencies, staffing shortages, or patient surges without triggering additional unfair labor practice charges and statutory penalties.

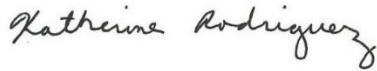
The consequences for patients could be significant. UC medical centers serve as major safety-net providers and tertiary referral centers for complex and critically ill patients, many of whom have

limited alternatives for specialized care. Delays in staffing flexibility can impair patient throughput, reduce operating room capacity, delay procedures, and disrupt continuity of care for medically vulnerable populations.

More broadly, CAPH is concerned that AB 1582 legislatively overrides collectively bargained agreements that already establish detailed operational rules, remedies, and dispute resolution processes. Existing law and negotiated agreements already provide mechanisms to address legitimate contracting violations without creating sweeping operational uncertainty for California's public hospital systems.

For these reasons, CAPH respectfully opposes AB 1582 (Ortega). If you have any questions regarding our position on this bill, please contact Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, at 916-272-0011. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katherine Rodriguez".

Katie Rodriguez
Interim President & CEO
California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems

CC: The Honorable Liz Ortega
Members of the Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement
Committee
Alma Perez, Chief Consultant, Senate Labor, Public Employment and
Retirement Committee
Jesse Herzer, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Scott Seekatz, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus