

July 5, 2021



*Representing California's Catholic
Health Systems and Hospitals*

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 1105 (Rodriguez) – Oppose, unless amended

Dear Senator Portantino:

The Alliance of Catholic Health Care, which represents California's Catholic-affiliated health systems and hospitals, must oppose, unless amended, AB 1105 (Rodriguez). This bill would mandate that hospitals implement a program to offer weekly COVID-19 testing for health care personnel, test all patients for COVID-19 prior to admission to the hospital, and monitor all patients during their hospital stay for the development of COVID-19 symptoms until January 1, 2025.

California's hospitals have been at the forefront of caring for all Californians and ensuring the safety of their workers. Even though COVID-19 has presented incredible and unforeseeable challenges, hospitals have met the challenge time and again by taking care of the sick and keeping their employees safe with effective, science-based infection control and protection. Remarkably, data from the California Workers' Compensation Institute has shown that, even though COVID-19 treatment is concentrated in the hospital setting, workers' compensation claims by health care employees rose by less than 1% when compared to pre-pandemic claims volume.

Hospitals have accomplished this extraordinary feat by following the regulatory guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and maintaining flexibility to adapt and allow the latest scientific findings to guide organizational practice. Unfortunately, AB 1105 would prevent hospitals from continuing their successful and innovative approaches to infection control.

We support the amendments proposed by the California Hospital Association to ensure hospitals can continue to follow the science. We urge the adoption of the following amendments:

- Permit flexible masking if supported by science and allow members to adjust masking policies to any future guidance from the CDC or CDPH.
- Align the definition of exposed health care personnel with existing law and CDC guidance and specify that the COVID-19 exposure that triggers mandatory testing is 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period.
- Create limited COVID-19 patient testing exceptions, including patient vaccine status and medical contra-indications, to ensure safety and evolving science.

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- Align the duration of these requirements with existing law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor last year, which extends these types of provisions until 2023.

For these reasons, we must oppose AB 1105 (Rodriguez), unless the above referenced amendments are accepted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori C. Dangberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lori" and last name "Dangberg" clearly visible.

Lori Cappello Dangberg

Vice President

cc: The Honorable Freddie Rodriguez
The Honorable Members of Senate Appropriations Committee