



May 21, 2018

Alameda
Central California
Coastal Valleys
Contra Costa
El Dorado
Imperial
Inland Counties
Kern
Los Angeles
Marin
Merced
Monterey
Mountain-Valley
Napa
North Coast
Northern California
Orange
Riverside
Sacramento
San Benito
San Diego
San Francisco
San Joaquin
San Luis Obispo
San Mateo
Santa Barbara
Santa Clara
Santa Cruz
Sierra-Sac Valley
Solano
Tuolumne
Ventura
Yolo

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1795/Gipson – Emergency medical services: behavioral health facilities and sobering centers
As Amended on April 19, 2018 – SUPPORT
Set for Suspense File Hearing May 25, 2018 – Assembly Appropriations Committee

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez Fletcher:

The Emergency Medical Services Administrators Association of California (EMSAAC) and the Emergency Medical Directors Association of California (EMDAC) support AB 1795 authored by Assembly Member Gipson, which would authorize a local emergency medical services agency to submit, as part of its emergency medical services (EMS) plan, a plan to transport specified patients to a behavioral health facility or sobering center in lieu of transportation to a general acute care hospital. This bill will enable patients to be properly assessed, treated, and transported to a facility specifically designed to meet the needs of the patient being served. By allowing prehospital personnel to transport patients to the appropriate care facility the first time, this bill has the added benefit eliminating secondary transfers, reducing unnecessary emergency department admissions, and increasing the availability of ambulances to respond life-threatening emergencies.

EMSAAC and EMDAC strongly believe that past 38 years have demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that local EMS agencies through their expert physician leadership can safely design EMS plans that meet the needs of individual patients and the communities we serve. Today, under the leadership and direction of local EMS agency physician medical directors, mobile intensive care paramedics deliver advanced life support (ALS) patient care to critically ill and injured Californians at their most vulnerable moments. Clearly these same paramedics under the direction of expert emergency medicine physician can safely and appropriately meet the special needs of patients best served by behavioral health facilities and sobering centers.

While we support AB1795 we also believe that the requirement for an additional 32 hours of instruction for each paramedic in a local EMS system creates an unnecessary barrier that will severely restrict ALS service providers from being able to participate in local EMS plans to transport specified patients to a behavioral health facility or sobering center. We estimate that ALS service providers will be required to spend an additional \$2,000 to \$4,000 in salary costs to train each paramedic and schedule a backfill on duty employee. This estimate does not include the additional costs for instructors and training material.

The physician medical directors of the local EMS agencies in California that closely monitor the capabilities of their local paramedics believe that minimum statutory should be no more than 8 hours. Determining if a patient's needs are best served by transport to a behavioral health facility is a triage function not a new paramedic skill. In order to truly serve our communities, we believe that local EMS agencies through their expert physician leadership need flexibility to develop, implement, and evaluate programs specifically designed to meet the unique needs and challenges of their own systems.

EMSAAC represents the 33 local emergency medical services (EMS) agency administrators representing all of California's 58 counties. The mission of the Emergency Medical Directors Association of California, Inc. (EMDAC) is to provide leadership and expert opinion in the medical oversight, direction and coordination of Emergency Medical Services for the people of the State of California.

If you should have any questions, please contact EMSAAC's Legislative Chair Dan Burch at (209) 468-6818.

Sincerely,

As signed by

Dan Burch
EMSAAC Legislative Chair

As signed by

Sam Stratton, MD
EMDAC Legislative Chair

cc: The Honorable Mike Gipson, Member, California State Assembly
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Lisa Murawski, Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jared Yoshiki, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus