

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

January 16, 2018

SUPPORT FOR AB 1795 (GIPSON): EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES:

COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES

State law currently requires local paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) responding to 911 calls to take patients directly to the appropriate acute care hospital emergency department. However, patients who are experiencing a mental health crisis or those with inebriation may receive timelier, more appropriate care at specialized medical facilities such as mental health urgent care centers and sobering centers. These community care facilities, unlike emergency departments (EDs), work only with these patient populations and can assure that these vulnerable patient populations are properly treated and provided targeted assistance for their crises and have every opportunity for appropriate follow-up treatment. Further, EDs have often become so overcrowded that ambulances are forced to wait, at times for hours, for a bed to open up so they can transfer care of their patient and become available to respond to the next emergency. The Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services system has already developed policies for the appropriate triage of patients suffering major trauma, heart attacks, pediatric emergencies, and strokes to appropriate specialty destinations. Similar systems can and should be developed to triage mental health crises and inebriation to mental health urgent care centers and sobering centers.

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Allowing ambulances to take patients directly to mental health urgent care centers and sobering centers can help reduce the strain on overcrowded EDs and reduce waiting time for ambulances while providing better healthcare and treatment opportunities to the patients at a lower cost to the healthcare system.

Since November 2014, the California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) has championed 13 community paramedicine pilot projects throughout the State, including pilot programs that allow paramedics to take patients to alternative destinations such as mental health urgent care centers or sobering centers. Overall these pilot projects have demonstrated that specially trained paramedics can provide services beyond their traditional scope of practice in California.¹

On January 24, 2017, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to 1) sponsor state legislation that would allow Emergency Medical Services agencies to enable paramedics and emergency medical technicians to directly transport patients to sobering and psychiatric urgent care centers; 2) direct the CEO and Sacramento Advocates to identify an author for the introduction of the state legislation; and 3) send a five-signature letter to the entire Los Angeles area County legislative delegation in Sacramento and to the Governor urging the introduction and enactment of the legislation. As a result of the County's efforts to pursue this important legislation, Assembly Member Mike Gipson introduced AB 1795 on January 9, 2018, which would allow local Emergency Medical Services agencies to submit a plan to the State Emergency Medical Services Authority to allow transport of patients to a community care facility (i.e. sobering centers or mental health urgent care centers) based on a

¹ California Health Care Foundation. "California's Community Paramedicine Pilot Projects." [emsa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/47/2017/07/C.P.-Pilot-Project-White-Paper-Jan-2017.pdf](https://www.emsa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/47/2017/07/C.P.-Pilot-Project-White-Paper-Jan-2017.pdf)

determination that there is no need for emergency medical treatment.

Allowing our local Emergency Medical System agency to develop a process that would safely take patients who are suffering from a mental health crisis or inebriation to the appropriate, specialized medical facility would help free up County resources, help patients receive appropriate care faster, and improve patient outcomes.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that this Board direct the Chief Executive Office to:

1. Instruct our Sacramento advocates to support passage of AB 1795 (Gipson), which would allow local Emergency Medical Services agencies to submit a plan to the State Emergency Medical Services Authority to allow transport of patients to a community care facility (i.e. sobering centers or mental health urgent care centers) based on a determination that there is no need for emergency medical treatment; and
2. Send a five-signature letter to Governor Brown and the County's Legislative Delegation, in support of this important legislation.

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