

County Executive
David Villanueva

Governmental Relations and
Legislative Officer
Elisia De Bord



County of Sacramento

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April 16, 2025

The Honorable Bonta, Chair
Assembly Health Committee
1021 O Street, Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1328 (Rodriguez). Medi-Cal Reimbursements: Ambulance
Transports - Nonemergency Ambulance Transportation.
Support
Hearing: April 22, 2025

Dear Assembly Member Bonta:

On behalf of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, I write to support AB 1328, which requires Medi-Cal fee-for-service plans to set reimbursement rates for interfacility ambulance transports at 100 percent of the Medicare ambulance fee schedule.

Emergency departments are not staffed with all specialists on site 24/7. It is common for a patient to seek care in an emergency department and, after a medical screening exam and initial care by an emergency physician, need specialty care not available in that hospital. In these instances, the emergency physician will transfer the patient to another facility with the necessary specialist, but the timeliness of the transfer is partially dependent on the availability of appropriate transportation. Ambulance services are not bound by the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act for the purposes of interfacility transport and can decline to provide transportation if there is no guarantee of payment.

Sacramento County predicts about 100 patients per month may not need to be in the emergency room and are better cared for at alternative destination sites as evidenced by trends in state law. Triage to alternative destinations results in less congested and costly emergency room visits and patients can receive more direct, appropriate care.

The non-emergency interfacility transfer of patients in any community plays a critical function in the care of patients. The ability to move a patient from one facility to another to get timely, definitive care is crucial. Without adequate reimbursement we will see an erosion of providers willing to carry out this function. This will result in

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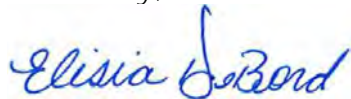
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delayed transfers, increasing **emergency departments'** patient boarding and ultimately worsen ambulance patient offload delays.

An increase in funding would help ensure adequate resources for the ambulance transportation arena. In situations where ambulance resources are limited, moving patients timely can become an issue and where patients are held in emergency departments waiting for transport, ambulance patient offload times can be negatively affected.

AB 1328 is an important step towards increasing access to transfers for California's most vulnerable by ensuring that interfacility transfers are appropriately reimbursed. For these reasons, Sacramento County supports this bill. Please feel free to contact me at (916) 874-4627 or deborde@sacounty.gov.

Sincerely,



Elisia De Bord
Governmental Relations and Legislative Officer

cc: The Honorable Michelle Rodriguez, Assembly Member
Members, Assembly Health Committee
Sacramento County Delegation
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
Audrey Ratajczak, Cruz Strategies