

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

APRIL 18, 2017

Support of Senate Bill 687, Save Our Emergency Rooms

Patient care suffers when nonprofit hospitals close. According to a 2014 Project Hope report published in the peer-reviewed journal, *Health Affairs*, the annual number of emergency department visits in the United States increased by 51%, yet the number of emergency departments decreased by 6%. The American College of Emergency Care reported that California has 6.7 emergency departments per 1 million people. This is the lowest ratio in the nation. According to a *Los Angeles Times* investigation, 50 hospitals have closed in California since 1998. As a result, patients risk waiting longer to receive lifesaving care due to overcrowding or traveling further distances to access services. Closing emergency rooms will worsen health outcomes and increase fatalities. Timeliness in receiving care is especially crucial when dealing with life-threatening occurrences like gunshot wounds, cardiac arrests, and strokes.

It is imperative that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors supports efforts to minimize harmful effects to their constituents due to the elimination or reduction of emergency services. Currently, California hospitals can chose to close regardless of negative impact to the surrounding community and must provide only a 90-day notice to the Department of Public Health. The Attorney General holds the unique authority to oversee nonprofit sales, yet it is important to expand this power to allow the Attorney General to review the impact of the hospital's decision to close before

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allowing it to move forward. Senate Bill 687 (Skinner) will require any nonprofit corporation that operates a health facility to give the Attorney General prior written notice and to obtain consent when closing a facility.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Chief Executive Officer and the Sacramento Legislative Advocates team to support SB 687 (Save Our Emergency Rooms, Sen. Nancy Skinner), send a letter to all members of the County's Legislative Delegation expressing the Board's support for this legislation, and keep the Board of Supervisors apprised of any progress on this bill.

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