

April 9, 2009

The Honorable Ted Lieu
The California State Assembly
State Capitol, 3173
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: AB 911 (Lieu) – Oppose Unless Amended

2009 California State Board of Directors

Dear Assemblymember Lieu:

Janet O'Leary, RN, President
Terri Sturgill, RN, President-Elect
Matthew F. Powers, RN, Past President
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Tobin Miller, RN, Secretary
Janet Williams, RN, Director at Large

The California Emergency Nurses Association (CalENA), representing emergency nurses throughout California, is writing today to inform you we have taken an oppose unless amended position on your bill AB 911. You and the California Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (Cal/ACEP) should be commended for addressing this issue. This bill attempts to ease the crisis of emergency department (ED) crowding by mandating a NEDOCS score be calculated every three hours and requires a corresponding ED crowding mitigation plan to be implemented.

Committee Chairpersons

Education: Anita Fligge, RN
EMS: Carole Snyder, RN
Ann Scott, RN
Historian: Liz Taylor, RN
Injury Prevention: Patrice Christensen RN
Leadership: Julie Rossie, RN
Newsletter: Mark Wandro, RN
Pediatrics: Christine Marshall, RN
Recruitment: Ellie Encapera, RN
Trauma: Robert Toman, RN
Webmaster: Mark Wandro, RN

There are a multitude of reasons why EDs are crowded including increasing population, the growing roles of the uninsured, the aging of the population that has greater healthcare needs, lack of primary care, lack of mental health and substance abuse services, and insufficient access to on-call specialists. These problems all contribute to more crowding in hospital EDs.

Contact Information

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There is no standard method to quantify the crowding severity of an ED. The National Emergency Department Overcrowding Scale (NEDOCS) is one scale that is mentioned in the literature; however there is not consensus that NEDOCS, or any other tool, is a valid measure of ED crowding. Codifying a crowding tool is premature.

Financial Correspondence:
Treasurer 2009
Linda Broyles RN
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The bill is also problematic in requiring ED staff to calculate a score every three hours. Hospitals with electronic medical records would be able to automate the system to perform this task; however, most EDs are not fully electronic and it would require a staff person to manually make the calculations.


Website

California State Council
www.calena.us
Webmaster: Mark Wandro
webmaster@calena.us
Emergency Nurses Association
www.ena.org

CalENA is requesting that the crowding tool be removed from the bill when the bill is heard in committee. Without this change, CalENA will be asking for a "NO" vote when the bill is heard.

Please contact me at (805) 701-9756 if you need further information.

Sincerely,


Janet O'Leary, RN
President

cc: Assembly Health Committee Members
Jennifer Kent, Legislative Deputy, Governor's Office
Scott Carney, Associate Secretary, Health and Human Services Agency