



June 12, 2023

The Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman
Chair, Senate Committee on Health
1021 O Street, Room 3310
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 1577 (Low) – Amended 4/27/23 Oppose

Dear Senator Talamantes Eggman:

As the voice for California’s baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, the California Association of Colleges of Nursing (CACN), representing higher education schools of nursing, is writing to oppose as amended AB 1577 (Low). While it appears the intent of the proposed legislation is to increase the supply of Registered Nurses in the state, as written, it will do exactly the opposite, by reducing the number of baccalaureate and master’s prepared nurses for the California workforce through clinical displacement.

Currently, California nursing programs are challenged to find clinical placement in general acute care hospitals, as well as other healthcare settings. As written, with the proposed mandate requiring “...a general acute care hospital to meet the clinical placement needs of community colleges or may be subject to a fine” AB 1577 will severely limit clinical placement opportunities for students enrolled in baccalaureate and higher education nursing programs. Without clinical placements for direct care learning experiences, the CACN member schools will need to even further limit student enrollment and/or consider closure, thereby creating a legislated bias for a specific type of nursing education program in the state.

Throughout the state, CACN member schools have collaborated with community college nursing programs and healthcare associations representing nursing education constituents to develop innovative strategies. These include regional clinical placement consortiums, concurrent enrollment curriculums, student externships, and nurse residency programs which foster strong and productive relationships. Through these partnerships it has been possible to develop pathways to streamline nursing education and prepare nurses for practice within the complex healthcare systems. Should it pass, AB 1577 will negatively impact these collaborative relationships, and furthermore create adversarial relationships between community college nursing programs and the nursing schools providing baccalaureate and higher education.

This bill results in the creation of strained relationships between schools of nursing and general acute care hospitals, our valued partners in education. Administrations representing community college nursing programs should not be placed in the untenable position of potentially causing hospital partners to be fined or license revoked, by not reporting accurate data or failing to meet clinical placement needs of community college nursing programs.

CACN understands the need for investment in the nursing workforce development and data collection systems. However, this bill would require arduous data reporting by general acute care hospitals which currently benefits the community college nursing programs through required clinical placement. Additionally, there is significant budget request to increase the nursing workforce by funding only the expansion of student enrollment in community college programs, thereby negating over a third of all nursing programs in the state. CACN feels that by simply doubling enrollments in community college nursing programs, in an already heavily impacted California nursing education system, will not adequately address the nursing workforce and healthcare needs within the state.

While it is a worthwhile endeavor to expand the nursing workforce, the demand for nurses with baccalaureate and higher degree preparation, is essential to meet the complexity of modern-day healthcare and contribute to better patient outcomes. CACN contends that all nursing programs need to expand, and efforts should therefore be directed to examining and resolving issues that prevent such expansion. Some of these issues include measures for increasing nursing faculty and removing BRN restrictions on enrollment, rather than creating adversarial relationships and discounting the need for nurses prepared at higher education nursing programs.

As alluded to above, California is experiencing a critical nursing faculty shortage which significantly impacts ability to educate and expand the nursing workforce. Students graduating from programs offering baccalaureate and master's degrees, are equipped to support the expansion of the nursing workforce and serve as clinical and/or academic educators.

In summation, legislation that negatively impacts the ability of baccalaureate and higher degree nursing programs to educate nurses, such as AB 1577, will only exacerbate the growing shortage of Registered Nurses in the state. For these reasons, CACN opposes the bill as amended.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.



Karen Bradley, DNP, RN, PHN, PNP-BC, NEA-BC
President, California Association of Colleges of Nursing
180 Promenade Circle, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA, 95833

Cc:

Assemblymember Evan Low (Author)

Senator Janet Nguyen (Vice Chair)

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