

June 14, 2024

The Honorable David Alvarez
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5320
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: Opposition to AB 2075 (Alvarez) – Resident Access Protection Act

Dear Assemblymember Alvarez,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), I write to oppose AB 2075 (Alvarez). AB 2075 would provide a resident of a long-term care facility with the right to in-person, onsite access to visitors during any public health emergency, including any infectious disease outbreak, bioterrorist attack, or natural disaster.

On March 4, 2020, the City of Long Beach and City Health Officer declared a local health emergency in response to COVID-19. The Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department) activated its Department Operations Center, prioritizing resources and leadership to focus on the clinical, epidemiological and community response. Throughout the pandemic, the City Health Officer issued health orders to control the spread of COVID-19, protect public health and welfare, and clarify or give direction and interpretation of the various State Health Orders and associated State guidance. The City Health Officer made difficult decisions to mitigate the spread of the disease, particularly for those who were most vulnerable such as residents in skilled nursing facilities. AB 2075 poses an unintentional threat to the health of long-term care residents and the community by limiting health officers' authority to safeguard residents in these facilities, their visitors, facility staff, and the broader community. Supplies such as personal protective equipment could be limited based on the nature of the threat; however, should AB 2075 pass, nothing could limit visitors at these facilities despite those resource limitations with health and safety impacts.

Local health officials recognize the importance that visitors have on the health and well-being of long-term care facility residents. In addition to protecting communities from infectious diseases, public health also strives to create an environment in which everyone has access to health and well-being, including mental and physical wellness. However, long-term care facility residents are particularly vulnerable during a public health emergency. Long Beach has 32 long-term care facilities throughout the City. While health officials use the least restrictive means to deal with a local public health emergency, local health officials need to retain authority as a tool to protect the health and well-being of the Long Beach community.

The City of Long Beach supports policies and legislation that protect and/or expand the City's authority and rights over its affairs. While we do not know what the next public health threat will look like, it is imperative that local health jurisdictions maintain authority to implement strategies that mitigate the spread of the disease, particularly for those who are most vulnerable such as residents in a long-term care facility. Preserving local control over health challenges will equip the City Health Officer with the tools to solve problems that are in the best interest of Long Beach.

For these reasons, the City opposes AB 2075.

Sincerely,



THOMAS B. MODICA
City Manager

cc: The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, State Senate, 33rd District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 65th District
The Honorable Josh Lowenthal, State Assembly, 69th District

