



**COUNTY OF  
SAN BERNARDINO**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Brad Mitzelfelt ..... *First District*  
Paul Biane ..... *Second District*  
Neil Derry..... *Third District*  
Gary Ovitt, Chair..... *Fourth District*  
Josie Gonzales, Vice-Chair ..... *Fifth District*

March 5, 2009

The Honorable Edward P. Hernandez  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 657 (Hernandez)** - As Introduced 2/25/09 - **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblyman Hernandez:

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is pleased to support AB 657 (Hernandez). AB 657 would require the California State Office of Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) to establish the Health Professions Workforce Task Force to assist in the development of a health professions workforce master plan for the state and would require the task force to submit to OSHPD recommendations for a statewide health professions workforce master plan.

As you know, an adequate supply of well-prepared public health professionals is essential to an effective public health system in America. Concerns about bio-terrorism and other terrorist attacks as well as the outbreak of Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) including a potential avian flu pandemic have made the country more acutely aware of the important responsibilities of the nation's public health system. At the same time, there is concern about the adequacy of the public health workforce, both in terms of the number of workers and their skills and competencies.

Recruitment difficulty for public health professionals is widespread. The inability to fill vacant public health positions typically leads to chronic understaffing and difficult working conditions. Many local public health departments report that they have learned to do more with less, but in many instances they are unable to maintain the level of services provided. As a result, direct patient services are reduced, the start-up of new programs is delayed and population-based services are cut back.

San Bernardino County's Department of Public Health has encountered continuing difficulties in hiring qualified public health professionals. Maintaining an adequate supply of public health professionals is necessary for the department's mission of protecting the health and safety of the citizens of San Bernardino County.

For these reasons, the Board of Supervisors of San Bernardino County supports AB 657. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lance Larson, the County's Director of Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821. The Board thanks you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

**GARY C. OVITT**  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

cc: Members, San Bernardino County Legislative Delegation

*The mission of the government of the County of San Bernardino is to satisfy its customers by providing service that promotes the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of its residents according to the County Charter, general laws, and the will of the people it serves.*