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May 20, 2014

The Honorable Roger Hernández
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1975 (Hernández) – As Amended May 7, 2014 – OPPOSE

Dear Assemblyman Hernández:

The County of San Bernardino respectfully opposes AB 1975, legislation that would require local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies to retain an independent nonprofit organization or governmental entity to assess the local EMS systems to conduct audits of local trauma centers.

Under current statute, local EMS agencies and their physician medical directors are responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of EMS trauma systems in their jurisdiction in accordance with the regulatory standards promulgated by the California EMS Authority. For more than 30 years, local EMS agencies and their physician medical directors have worked tirelessly to balance competing interests and resources to design and redesign trauma systems that best meet the needs of seriously injured patients.

Local EMS agencies, with the oversight of the EMS Authority and the Commission on EMS, currently perform objective and independent trauma planning and system evaluation. While there may be value, on a case by case basis, for a local EMS agency voluntarily choosing to retain an independent nonprofit organization or a qualified governmental entity to assess trauma systems, there exists no compelling argument to mandate this use statewide or in each local EMS system.

It is anticipated that AB 1975's mandate will cost counties and local EMS agencies, at a minimum, \$65,000 every five years, not including the necessary EMS staff time to prepare and support the external audit. The increase in EMS staff costs could surpass \$100,000 a year in many counties. Local jurisdictions would have no choice but to pass these costs to hospitals by increasing trauma center designation fees.

Managing a trauma system is extremely complex and unique to each county; local EMS agencies have the necessary expertise and knowledge to impartially oversee these systems.

For the reasons stated above, we must respectfully oppose AB 1975. Please contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs, at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcountry.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

JANICE RUTHERFORD
Board of Supervisors Chair
Second District Supervisor
County of San Bernardino

c: County of San Bernardino Legislative Delegation