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From: Sharon Richards <srichards@hasc.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2025 2:20 PM
To: COB_Response
Subject: HASC Support Letter re: Item S9D
Attachments: HASC Support Letter RE Ordinance 2025.pdf

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Please accept the following letter of support.

Sharon Richards

Assistant to Sara May, Regional Vice President, Orange County

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October 30, 2025

RE: Support for Ordinance Amending Sections 4-11-2, 4-11-7, and 4-11-16 of the Codified Ordinances of the County of Orange to Protect Emergency Care for All Orange County Residents

Dear Chairman Chaffee and Honorable Supervisors,

On behalf of the Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC), we express our strong support for the proposed ordinance amending Sections 4-11-2, 4-11-7, and 4-11-16 of the Codified Ordinances of the County of Orange, which strengthens contracting requirements for the Orange County Health Authority (CalOptima Health) and protects emergency care for all Orange County residents.

This ordinance represents a vital step toward ensuring that all Orange County residents — regardless of payer status — have equitable access to emergency medical services (EMS) and hospital-based care. By requiring CalOptima Health to offer network contracts with all acute care hospitals designated by Orange County Emergency Medical Services as emergency receiving centers, the ordinance safeguards the safety net that guarantees timely emergency treatment for every community in the County.

Under the Federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA), hospitals are legally required to provide emergency medical care to all individuals, regardless of insurance coverage or ability to pay. Orange County hospitals uphold this commitment every day — treating every patient who arrives in an emergency, even when no CalOptima Health contract exists. However, hospitals' ability to sustain this federally mandated care is increasingly at risk due to significant financial pressures from Federal and State policy changes.

This ordinance helps align local policy with EMTALA's intent by ensuring that CalOptima Health members are not excluded from the hospital networks that provide emergency and post-stabilization care.

Across California, and here in Orange County, hospitals are operating under severe financial strain. Even prior to recent Federal and State policy changes, Medi-Cal reimbursement rates did not cover the true cost of providing care, particularly in emergency settings where the intensity and resource needs are greatest. These recent changes have only worsened the financial instability facing hospitals, leading to the closure of acute care services, longer patient wait times, reduced access to care, loss of jobs, and workforce impacts. Hospitals across the U.S. have closed their doors due to financial distress — a troubling trend that will ripple further across our communities.

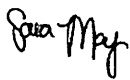
Access to emergency care is not a privilege; it is a fundamental public necessity. Every minute counts in an emergency and ensuring that residents can receive care at their nearest emergency department — without administrative or network barriers — is essential to saving lives and improving outcomes. This ordinance recognizes the indispensable role of every emergency receiving hospital in providing that access across Orange County.

By reaffirming CalOptima Health's responsibility to maintain equitable and inclusive contracting relationships with all emergency receiving hospitals, this ordinance helps preserve the viability of the hospitals that serve as critical access points for low-income and vulnerable patients.

We urge the Board of Supervisors to adopt this ordinance to safeguard emergency access and strengthen Orange County's health care safety net. Protecting access to emergency care is essential for the health, safety, and well-being of all Orange County residents.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to ensuring that our community's hospitals can continue providing life-saving care to everyone in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara May".

Sara May
Regional Vice President
HASC