

**From:** [Sharon Richards](#)  
**To:** [COB Response](#)  
**Subject:** Letter of Support - Agenda Item #10, December 5th, 2023  
**Date:** Monday, December 04, 2023 5:10:16 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[HASC Letter\\_SB 43 Delay\\_OC.pdf](#)

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**Attention:** This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Good Afternoon,

Please find the attached letter in support of delaying SB43, item #10 on tomorrow's agenda.



December 4, 2023

The Honorable Don Wagner, Chair  
Orange County Board of Supervisors  
400 W. Civic Center Drive  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Chair Wagner:

The Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC) is a trade association representing more than 190 hospitals across six counties to improve health and healthcare in our communities. We write to you today with concerns related to a new law that will go into effect on January 1, 2024.

Senate Bill (SB) 43 by Senator Susan Eggman expands the definition of “gravely disabled” for purposes of involuntarily detaining, treating, or conserving an individual by including individuals that may have a severe substance use disorder (SUD), or a co-occurring mental health (MH) disorder and a severe SUD.

Hospitals support the goals outlined in SB 43 and are committed to working in partnership and collaboration with the county, health providers, law enforcement, EMS, the court system, and all stakeholders necessary to make the implementation of this law successful. A hopeful result of this new law may allow individuals struggling with MH disorder and SUD to access treatment more readily and get the help they need.

However, hospitals are concerned that the current behavioral health system is not yet comprehensive enough to address the influx of new patients meant to be served by this law. **Therefore, we support a delay in the implementation of this law until 2026, as permitted by SB 43.**

Our designated and non-designated hospitals are currently operating at maximum capacity, and given the severe shortage of inpatient psychiatric beds available (public and private) to accommodate patients under involuntary holds in the county, our behavioral health care delivery system does not have the full infrastructure in place yet to serve the deluge of patients that this law will generate. The legislation provided no mechanism to ensure adequate beds or treatment providers nor additional funding to meet the demand for additional services.

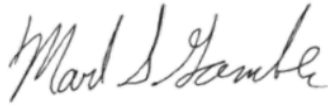
With the unprecedented transformation of our state’s mental and behavioral health and substance abuse focus, along with the monumental increases in funding extending to counties, we urge the Orange County Board of Supervisors Office to delay the implementation of SB 43 to January 1, 2026, to allow time for our care delivery infrastructure to be strengthened by the forthcoming resources so that we can offer appropriate alternatives to individuals placed on involuntary psychiatric holds in the community.

New programs, education, processes, training, and capacity must be created to serve this newly eligible population for involuntary detention, and without careful planning to bolster the system, this inundation will cause significant strains on our hospitals and the 9-1-1 system.

Acutely ill patients will experience even longer emergency room wait times; psychiatric patients will be forced to wait even longer for a transfer to the most appropriate setting for the most suitable and therapeutic treatment; and first responders will spend even more hours transporting MH and SUD patients to emergency rooms, diverting valuable time away from serving community members with medical emergencies or public safety distresses, particularly when timely responses are critical in such cases.

We appreciate your consideration of delaying SB 43 to 2026. We value our partnerships within the County of Orange and welcome additional conversations regarding SB 43's impact on hospitals and the entire health care delivery system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark S. Gamble".

Mark Gamble  
Chief, Advocacy & Operations  
Hospital Association of Southern California

CC:  
Orange County Supervisors, Districts 1 – 5  
Dr. Veronica Kelley  
Orange County Hospital CEOs  
Orange County Hospital GR Executives