

# ATTACHMENT

For Item

#6

Tuesday, December  
5, 2023

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December 1, 2023

Chair Nora Vargas  
San Diego County Board of Supervisors  
County Administration Center  
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335  
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Chair Vargas

The Grossmont Healthcare District (GHD), East County San Diego's public health agency is writing to respectfully request the Board of Supervisors pass a resolution to delay the implementation of SB 43 (Eggman) in San Diego County.

SB 43 was recently signed by Governor Newsom which expands the definition of gravely disabled to include a person, who because of a severe substance use disorder or severe substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health condition, is unable to provide for their basic personal needs for food, clothing, shelter, personal safety, or necessary medical care. Under SB 43, law enforcement or county-designated professionals can place a now broader group of individuals on involuntary holds and transport them to emergency departments for an up to 72-hour psychiatric evaluation and possible hospitalization.

Grossmont Hospital already struggles to meet the increasing demands of patients needing involuntary treatment that are brought into the emergency department. These issues are further exasperated by the current lack of post-acute care resources designated by the county to help individuals placed on involuntary holds. This leads to patients languishing in the emergency department for days awaiting treatment at a county designated facility. Expanding the definition of gravely disabled, as done in SB 43, will lead to an even greater volume of patients with substance use disorders placed on involuntary holds coming into the already overcrowded emergency department at Grossmont Hospital. To further complicate the situation many counties designated facilities may not be equipped or staffed to handle or even accept the transfer of a patient with a substance use disorder which will lead to an even more crowded emergency department. SB 43 does nothing to increase the capacity of county designated facilities needed to evaluate and treat these additional patients placed on involuntary holds.

SB 43 takes effect on January 1, 2024; however, counties are permitted to approve a delay of the implementation up to January 1, 2026. Many counties are seeking to delay implementation to allow for regional and statewide workgroups to convene to develop policies, implementation plans, and work through many other complicated aspects to successfully implement the new law. A delay would also allow for the County of San Diego to work to ensure sufficient services are in place for people who are deemed to meet the new requirements of gravely disabled.

We are committed to working with the various stakeholders in our community to support a successful implementation. Delaying the implementation of SB 43 will preserve the limited capacity within our already strained healthcare system and allow time for county staff to create the policies and procedures needed to ensure the successful implementation of a program meant to help the most vulnerable members of our community.

Sincerely,



Christian Wallis, DHA, MBA, FACHE,  
CEO