

N A S W

National Association of Social Workers - California Chapter

March 20, 2017

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 349 (Lara) The Dialysis Patient Safety Act

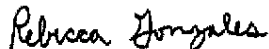
Dear Senator Lara,

The National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter (NASW-CA) strongly supports your SB 349 (Lara), which would improve dialysis patient safety and reduce avoidable medical complications for patients receiving treatment at outpatient clinics. This bill establishes minimum staffing ratios as well as increases clinic inspections and requires adequate time to clean and prepare dialysis equipment between patients. All of these requirements will greatly improve this safety of this critical procedure.

Dialysis is a life-saving treatment for people with end stage renal disease, and patients generally continue to receive dialysis for life unless they receive a kidney transplant. Patients typically receive dialysis three days each week, with each treatment lasting 3-4 hours. During each treatment a care technician and a registered nurse have primary responsibility for the patient's care, and a social worker is also on hand to guide the patient through this life saving procedure. Currently, staffing levels are dangerously high. In fact, the United States has the worst dialysis patient outcomes in the industrialized world with only one in three American patients on dialysis surviving after five years. This bill is critical for the safety of these patients.

The National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter represents over 10,000 professional social workers in California who have degrees from accredited social work programs across the Country. NASW-CA advocates, on behalf of our members and their clients, for the implementation and improvement of programs and policies designed to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Gonzales, Director of Government Relations and Political Affairs

cc: Members of the Senate Health Committee