

CSP Advocates for Strengthening California's Clinical Laboratory and Medical Workforce

California is facing a critical shortage of clinical laboratory professionals and physicians, placing strain on the state's diagnostic infrastructure and healthcare delivery system. To address these challenges, several bills have been introduced in the 2025 legislative session: AB 304, AB 481, SB 246 and SB 339. Collectively, these measures aim to expand workforce pipelines, modernize regulatory frameworks, and improve reimbursement mechanisms. The California Society of Pathologists (CSP) supports all four bills, viewing them as key opportunities to strengthen the state's healthcare system through sustainable investment and reform.

Legislative Summaries and CSP Positions

AB 304 – Clinical Laboratories: Workforce Development Grants

Author: Assemblymember Phillip Chen

Summary: This bill establishes a grant program managed by the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), in collaboration with the Department of Public Health (DPH), to support training programs for clinical laboratory scientists (CLS) and medical laboratory technicians (MLT). Funding will be directed to state-approved or accredited institutions to increase training capacity and address critical workforce shortages.

CSP Position: Support

The CSP strongly supports AB 304, citing the urgent need to grow California's CLS and MLT workforce. This bill aligns with the Society's mission to ensure high-quality diagnostic care through a well-trained, adequately resourced laboratory workforce.

AB 481 – Healing Arts: Clinical Laboratories: Personnel

Author: Assemblymember Blanca Rubio

Summary: AB 481 updates laws governing the licensure and oversight of clinical laboratory personnel. The bill seeks to modernize regulatory frameworks, improve clarity in licensure processes, and introduce more flexibility in clinical workforce deployment.

CSP Position: Support

CSP supports this bill for its potential to streamline clinical workforce regulations and facilitate access to the profession, ensuring continued diagnostic capacity across the state.

SB 246 – Medi-Cal: Graduate Medical Education Payments

Author: Senator Grove

Summary: This bill requires the state to provide additional Medi-Cal payments to hospitals that operate graduate medical education (GME) programs. The goal is to retain and train more physicians, particularly in underserved areas where workforce shortages are most severe.

CSP Position: Support

CSP supports SB 246 as it strengthens the physician pipeline and addresses disparities in care availability. Support for GME aligns with CSP's broader commitment to high-quality medical education.

SB 339 – Medi-Cal: Laboratory Rates

Author: Senator Cabaldon

Summary: SB 339 removes outdated Medi-Cal laboratory rate payment caps and mandates an update to the reimbursement methodology to better reflect modern clinical practices and costs.

CSP Position: Support

CSP supports this bill because it promotes financial sustainability for clinical laboratories, which are foundational to patient diagnosis and treatment.

The clinical diagnostic and medical workforce is a cornerstone of California's healthcare system. Legislative actions such as AB 304, AB 481, SB 246 and SB 339 offer promising solutions to longstanding challenges in training, licensing, and funding. The California Society of Pathologists endorses each of these measures as a step toward a more resilient, equitable, and future-ready healthcare infrastructure.

Should you have questions on any of these bills, please contact your Practice Manager.