LIVER COALITION™ OF SAN DIEGO

February 21, 2025

Assemblymember Mia Bonta
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1020 N Street, Room 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support AB 309 (Zbur) HIV & Hepatitis Prevention

Dear Chair Bonta,

On behalf of the nearly 54,000 individuals currently living with hepatitis C in San Diego County, the Liver Coalition of San Diego supports AB 309, by Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur.

This bill's focus is supported by our local Hepatitis C Elimination Initiative, a public-private partnership between the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency and community stakeholders to eliminate hepatitis C by 2030. The Initiative identified nine consensus-driven recommendations to reach hepatitis C elimination goals. Recommendation 2: Implement prevention strategies in alignment with current best practices, addressing activities to reduce harm via the risk of transmission.

This bill will ensure that pharmacists maintain the discretion to furnish sterile syringes without a prescription and that adults may legally possess syringes solely for personal use, as part of the state's comprehensive strategy to prevent the spread of HIV and viral hepatitis. Pharmacists play a key role in public health by educating patients, particularly regarding the safe use of nonprescription syringes. With the removal of a statutory sunset, pharmacists will continue to provide education on drug treatment programs, HIV and hepatitis testing, and safe sharps disposal.

More than 200 studies from the United States and abroad have shown that improved syringe access reduces the rate of syringe sharing and disease transmission, without increasing rates of drug use, drug injection, crime, or the unsafe discard of syringes. To date, no study has found otherwise.

For these compassionate and evidence-based reasons, we support AB 309 (Zbur) and request your support when the bill comes before you in the Assembly Health Committee.

Sincerely,



Scott Suckow
Executive Director

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