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March 17, 2009

The Honorable Mary Hayashi, Chair
Assembly Business and Professions Committee
California State Assembly
State Capitol, PO Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0018

RE: Support for AB 418 (Emmerson), California Pharmacy Technician Patient Safety and Protection Act

Dear Assemblywoman Hayashi:

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP), together with our affiliate, the California Society of Health-System Pharmacists, strongly encourages you to support AB 418, the California Pharmacy Technician Patient Safety and Protection Act. This proposed legislation seeks to set a minimum standard of education and training of pharmacy technicians within the state. Such standards are vital in the efforts to protect the public health and ensure that we have a standardized and competent technician workforce.

As the national professional association representing over 35,000 pharmacists who practice in hospitals and health systems, ASHP offers unique and vital feedback on this important health-care issue. Pharmacists in hospitals and health systems are experts in medication use who serve on interdisciplinary patient-care teams. They work with physicians, nurses, and other health-care professionals to ensure that medicines are used safely, effectively, and in a cost-conscious manner. On a daily basis, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians work together. We are therefore most interested in promoting and supporting legislation that emphasizes the value of education, training, and certification of our technician workforce.

This bill is a vital piece of patient safety legislation. The lack of appropriate education, training, and certification requirements for pharmacy technicians has received national media attention, with *USA Today*, *Good Morning America*, *20/20*, and *World News Tonight* all reporting on the tragic and deadly results of medication errors involving pharmacy technicians. The benefit of accredited training and education is that it serves as

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an educational basis for all practice settings. Taken together with national certification, as through the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board, such legislation reflects the understanding that what a pharmacy technician does is just as important as how it is done. Accredited education programs provide the baseline skills that are required for an effective pharmacy technician. National certification reflects a competency and understanding of the basic knowledge that is required for those who work on the pharmacy front-lines.

As you deliberate this issue, we encourage you to carefully consider AB 418 in the interest of patient safety and support accredited education, training, and certification for the pharmacy technicians who serve the citizens of California. When education is combined with training under a licensed pharmacist and national certification, pharmacy technicians are better equipped to meet the medication-related needs of all patients in all practice settings. Your support for AB 418 would be consistent with what pharmacists in the state – the health professionals who have ultimate responsibility for the safety of medication dispensing and distribution – believe should be done. Feel free to contact me directly at 301-664-8687 or gtrujillo@ashp.org, should you have any additional questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Geralyn M. Trujillo, MPP

Director, State Government Affairs

cc: Dawn Benton, California Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Ross Warren, Assembly Business & Professions Committee
Ted Blanchard, Assembly Republican Caucus