

June 9, 2010

The Honorable Gloria Romero
Chair, Senate Education Committee
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 2090
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 35 (Furutani) – SUPPORT AS AMENDED

Dear Senator Romero:

On behalf of the California Healthcare Institute (CHI), whose more than 270 members include our state's premier biotechnology firms, medical device companies, pharmaceuticals, and academic research institutions, I am writing to support AB 35. This bill would require the Chancellor and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, in consultation with the California Postsecondary Education Commission, California Department of Education, California Workforce Development Board, and other stakeholders to develop recommendations to the Legislature for a state strategic plan for workforce development.

California is home to three of the most robust biomedical research innovation clusters – the San Francisco Bay area, San Diego, and Orange County. The biomedical industry employs over 271,000 Californians with an average wage of \$75,000 per year. CHI's member companies are engaged in the research and development of ground breaking therapies that will hopefully lead to the next generation of cures for a host of life threatening conditions, including cancer, HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes and others.

While our biomedical research companies require scientists and researchers with high levels of education, we are proud that several of our companies also manufacture their products right here in California – and there is a

serious shortage of appropriately trained personnel to operate these highly specialized manufacturing operations.

CHI strongly believes that California must invest in workforce development and career technical education if we desire to remain the world leader in biomedical research and innovation. At a time when several biomedical companies are looking to expand their manufacturing operations outside of the Golden State where business climates and tax policies are more favorable, California cannot afford to have a shortage of competently trained applicants for the solid work opportunities provided by the biomedical industry.

We are confident that AB 35 will be a step in the right direction to bridge the gap between employer needs and appropriate workforce development in the state. We hope that when the Chancellor and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges consider the workforce development needs in the state that they will recognize the untapped opportunities within the biomedical industry. CHI is pleased to support AB 35, and willing to assist in the improvement of workforce development in the state. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra Pizarro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sandra Pizarro
Vice President – State Government Affairs

cc: Chair & Members, Senate Education Committee
Senate Republican Caucus