June 26, 2013

The Honorable Richard S. Gordon
Chair, Assembly Business, Professions and Consumer Protection Committee
1020 N Street, Room 383
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE:  **SB 493 (Hernandez), as amended May 28, 2013**  
**Scheduled for Hearing in the Assembly Business, Professions and Consumer Protection Committee on July 2, 2013**  
**Position: Support**

Dear Assemblmembere Gordon:

The University of California (UC) is pleased to support Senate Bill (SB) 493, a bill introduced by Senator Hernandez in the current legislative session that proposes changes in the “scope of practice” for pharmacists who are licensed to practice in California. The bill also proposes a mechanism for recognition of advanced practice pharmacists (APP), and authorizes the California Board of Pharmacy to set the fee for the issuance and renewal of APP recognition.

The implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will have an unprecedented impact on California’s demand for health services and will exacerbate existing statewide health workforce challenges. The approximately 1.7 to 3 million Californians who will become eligible for health benefits in 2014, together with the demographic changes occurring in the state (i.e., the growth and aging of the current population), will significantly increase the demand for primary care providers, including physicians, nurses, physician assistants, and others. Enabling pharmacists, who are among the most accessible health care professionals in our communities, to work and practice to the full extent of their education and training is an available strategy that could help address the primary care physician shortage and expand access to specified services for many Californians.

The bill’s proposed recognition of pharmacists as State of California “providers” is also significant, as this status in various settings has the potential to allow future reimbursement for these services. This change would come at an especially important time as the federal Centers
for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) is currently evaluating this issue and making policy decisions regarding designation of pharmacists as Medicare providers.

As you are likely aware, the University of California operates the largest health sciences system in the nation. Collectively referred to as UC Health, this system includes 17 health professional schools on seven UC campuses, and 10 hospitals operated by the UC medical centers. SB 493 proposes changes that could impact UC in many important ways given the University’s roles as educators of health professionals; providers of clinical care in UC hospitals and clinics; and employers facing rising health benefit costs for our UC employees.

Among UC’s 17 health professional schools and many other health professions training “programs” are two UC Schools of Pharmacy (located at UC San Diego and UC San Francisco). Both schools operate educational programs leading to the Doctor of Pharmacy degree (Pharm.D.), and all five UC campuses with medical centers (Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco) provide pharmaceutical services to patients. Our UC medical centers also offer accredited, postgraduate residency programs, which satisfy one of the criteria for state recognition as an “advanced practice pharmacist.” Each UC pharmacy school is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) – which is the national agency for the accreditation of professional degree programs in pharmacy and providers of continuing pharmacy education and all UC pharmacy residency programs are accredited by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). Of particular relevance to the state, graduates of UC pharmacy programs consistently meet high national and state standards in terms of certification and licensure.

The proposed changes envisioned in SB 493 would bring California into closer alignment with the practice environment and innovative care models used in federal pharmacy programs in the Department of Defense, the Veterans Administration, and the U.S. Public Health Service, where pharmacists have been practicing in collaborative ways for more than forty years. The intent of this measure aligns with many of the guiding principles that UC considers when reviewing scope of practice legislation or other measures related to patient care. Among these are considerations regarding the anticipated impact on: quality of care; access to care; leveraging skills and qualifications of educated providers; and the anticipated cost impact.

Within this context, a 2011 Report to the U.S. Surgeon General Improving Patient and Health System Outcomes through Advanced Pharmacy Practice prepared by the national Public Health Service’s Office of the Chief Pharmacist provides evidence-based data to support health reform through pharmacists delivering expanded patient care services. This report makes a compelling case that pharmacists are “uniquely positioned (through their accessibility, expertise and experience) to play a much larger patient care role in the U.S. health care delivery system” to help meet unmet demands and improve the health of Americans. Full and consistent recognition of scope of practice and provider status by health care payers for California pharmacists would enable the profession to make significant strides forward. In this era of limited resources, the changes proposed in SB 493 would help increase workforce capacity, improve access to care,
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more fully integrate the pharmacy profession into the health care team, and potentially offer much-needed cost savings to California.

On behalf of the University of California, we commend Senator Hernandez for his leadership on these issues and urge your “aye” vote. Please feel free to contact me at (510) 987-9071, or Angela Gilliard in our Sacramento office at (916) 445-9924, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John D. Stobo, MD  
Senior Vice President

cc:  The Honorable Edward Hernandez  
Vice Chair and Members, Assembly Business, Professions and Consumer Protection Committee  
President Mark G. Yudof  
Provost Aimee Dorr  
Senior Vice President Daniel Dooley  
Vice President Patrick Lenz  
Associate Vice President and Director Steve Juarez  
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UC Pharmacy Deans