



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 29 2014

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2616 without my signature.

This bill would create a first of its kind private employer workers' compensation presumption for a specific staph infection -- methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) -- for certain hospital employees.

California's no-fault system of worker's compensation insurance requires that claims must be "liberally construed" to extend benefits to injured workers whenever possible. The determination that an illness is work-related should be decided by the rules of that system and on the specific facts of each employee's situation. While I am aware that statutory presumptions have steadily expanded for certain public employees, I am not inclined to further this trend or to introduce it into the private sector.

Some have reported that hospitals have intimidated nurses from filing valid worker's compensation claims for a work-related MRSA infection. Any such conduct would be reprehensible. I am therefore directing the Department of Industrial Relations to investigate and take whatever action is needed.

Sincerely,


Edmund G. Brown Jr.