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## Yamada Audit Request Approved

**SACRAMENTO-** Today, the California Legislature’s Joint Legislative Audit Committee, or “JLAC”, has approved a request to audit the Department of Public Health’s Licensing and Certification Division’s regulation of long-term health care facilities. The request was made by Assemblymember Mariko Yamada (D-Davis), Chair of the Aging and Long-Term Care Committee, after a recent oversight hearing revealed complaint investigation back-logs in the thousands, leaving unanswered questions about how safe long-term care health facilities are, and the effectiveness of the state’s safety enforcement apparatus.

“With this approval from JLAC, we are making progress toward understanding the barriers that prevent the Department of Public Health from completing timely investigations of allegations of abuse and misconduct at our long-term care health facilities,” Yamada stated. “This audit request should help re-focus a commitment to quality and safety, and restore confidence that that the state of California will respond quickly and decisively when a vulnerable individual’s health or safety is in jeopardy.”

The Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) investigates, studies, analyzes, and assesses the performance of government agencies and other public entities in California to ensure programs are achieving their legislative intent with the goal of improving government performance. In January, Assemblymember Yamada co-chaired a joint oversight hearing of the Assembly Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care and Assembly Committee on Health after recent media accounts alleged wide lapses in regulatory enforcement. Testimony revealed thousands of backlogged complaints of mistreatment, misconduct and abuse that have languished for years with incomplete investigation leaving medically frail, dependent adults at risk of potential harm.

Yamada has also introduced AB 1816 to address investigation timelines, and create a statutory barrier to future investigation back-logs. AB 1816 requires an investigation be completed within 40 working days of receipt of a complaint, with allowances for extensions under circumstances where evidence is difficult to obtain or verify. Existing law mandates investigations be initiated within 2-10 days, but does not explicitly require or stipulate to an investigative endpoint.

Yamada represents all or parts of Colusa, Lake, Napa, Solano, Sonoma and Yolo counties.

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