



COALITION TO PROTECT ACCESS TO CARE

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Contact: Molly Weedn
molly@axiomadvisors.com

Coalition To Protect Access to Health Care Submits Initiative to the Attorney General

Ballot measure would increase access to health care across California

Sacramento – Today, the Coalition to Protect Access to Care has filed a ballot measure to permanently use dedicated funding to expand access to health care and support California Medicaid (Medi-Cal) providers including hospitals, physicians, dentists, women's health and community clinics and health centers.

The initiative follows a 2023-24 budget proposal to draw down existing federal funding to expand access to care. The measure will build on the historic investment that the Governor and Legislature have made, by extending the funding to ensure care for years to come.

"The Protect Access to Healthcare initiative will improve access to health care, reduce emergency room wait times for all Californians, make prescription drugs more affordable and expand our health care workforce," **said Donald Hernandez, M.D., President of the California Medical Association.** "This initiative represents the most important investment in California's health care in our state's history and will increase access to care well into the future."

"It's important to ensure that Californians have access to health care which is exactly what this ballot measure will help ensure. This measure will help Planned Parenthood health centers, and other community health centers, invest in workforce, expand services, and ultimately be able to serve more patients," **said Jodi Hicks, President/CEO, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California.** "Funding for Medi-Cal is critical for the millions of Californians who rely on the program for essential reproductive health care."

Medi-Cal provides health insurance to low-income children, families, people with disabilities, homeless and elderly populations. More than 15 million Californians and nearly 50 percent of children get their health care through the Medi-Cal program, making it an essential program for preventive and routine care for kids across the state.

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“CPCA is excited to support this historic ballot measure that will infuse billions of dollars into Medi-Cal, increasing timely access to care for the more than 15 million Medi-Cal patients,” **said Francisco J. Silva, President & CEO of the Primary Care Association**. “Community health centers serve one in five Californians and one-third of the Medi-Cal patients. These funds will provide much needed support for Medi-Cal providers and their patients, after decades of underfunding. This ballot initiative, will help all Californians by ensuring that nobody struggles to access the healthcare they need.”

“Workers throughout our healthcare system see the effects every day of inadequate Medi-Cal funding: Medi-Cal patients, who are disproportionately people of color, have difficulty accessing care and have worse health outcomes,” **said Tia Orr, Executive Director SEIU CA**. “We’ve said for years that this is a huge equity issue, and we are happy to partner with providers and other healthcare stakeholders to start addressing these problems at scale through this initiative. We are also facing a healthcare workforce crisis, with a growing shortage of healthcare workers. This initiative will provide resources to train the next wave of healthcare workers to care for our patients.”

“This ballot initiative would link the MCO tax to Medi-Cal provider rates, making a permanent investment in access to high quality care for those who are socially disadvantaged,” **said Linnea Koopmans, CEO of the Local Health Plans of California**. “Medi-Cal is transforming to a person-centered approach to care, which requires networks with a broad range of providers to support Medi-Cal enrollees’ needs.”

“This is an important moment to strengthen the Medi-Cal program for the long-term,” **said John Blake, DDS, President of the California Dental Association**. “Medi-Cal needs permanent, sustainable funding and that’s what this initiative provides. The 15 million Californians relying on Medi-Cal for their medical and dental coverage deserve this ongoing commitment.”

The measure will increase reimbursement rates for Medi-Cal providers - some of which have not been increased in decades - and will expand California’s education and training to create a pipeline of health care providers including nurses, dentists, physician assistants, and medical assistants. These actions will bring more providers to areas across California where they are needed most.

“This ballot measure represents an ongoing commitment to caring for our most vulnerable communities,” **said Carmela Coyle, President & CEO of the California Hospital Association**. “The Medi-Cal program provides vital health care services to low-income Californians, children, people of color, disabled individuals, low-income seniors, and others. This investment will help increase access to care for communities in need across California.”

The initiative will:

- Increase funding for mental health programs that care for children and Medi-Cal patients,

- Expand access to health care for Medi-Cal patients, which will result in reduced emergency room usage, and shortened wait times for all Californians, and
- Will enable California to manufacture its own insulin and other prescription drugs for Californians at much lower prices than exist currently

In addition to funding mental health programs, and reducing the cost of prescription drugs, the measure will ensure that Medi-Cal patients have more access to preventive care, which will reduce expensive and timely emergency room usage, which will benefit everyone.

“L.A. Care was proud to be among the health care leaders who were able to convince state leaders to resurrect the MCO tax resulting in a historic increase in funding for Medi-Cal in alignment with our Board-approved policy principles,” **said John Baackes, CEO of L.A. Care, the nation’s largest publicly operated health plan.** “It demonstrated the power of a coalition. Working together, we can find solutions to benefit vulnerable populations across the state.”

When qualified, the initiative will appear on the November 2024 ballot. For more information, visit ProtectHealthCareCA.com

About the Coalition to Protect Access to Care

The Coalition to Protect Access to Care is a group of doctors, hospitals, health care workers, community health centers, Planned Parenthood, dentists, health plans and emergency responders dedicated to increasing access to health care.