HEALTH4ALL: FULL-SCOPE MEDI-CAL FOR ALL ADULTS, REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

Since 2016, California has made significant progress toward ending discriminatory barriersto our Medi-Cal program. Income-eligible children under the age of 18, young adults ages 19 to 25, and soon older adults ages 50 and above (after May 1, 2022) are now eligible for Medi-Cal regardless of where they were born.Yet undocumented Californians continue to make up the largest group within the nearly 3.2 million Californians who remain uninsured in the state.[1] An estimated 764,000 undocumented Californians ages 26-49 years old are income-eligible for full-scope Medi-Cal but remain explicitly and unjustly excluded solely due to their immigration status.[2] These individuals are currently only eligible for restricted-scope or "emergency" Medi-Cal, which narrowly covers emergency room services and pregnancy-related services.[3] They are excluded from comprehensive benefits and basic preventive and primary care provided under full-scope Medi-Cal.

The California Immigrant Policy Center and Health Access California, along with the broad and diverse #Health4All coalition made up of dozens of health and community organizations, support Governor Newsom's 2022-23 budget proposal to once and for all remove immigration status as a Medi-Cal eligibility requirement. This would expand coverage to all adults whose incomes are at or below 138% of the federal poverty level, regardless of immigration status.

Health insurance protects individuals from from financial distress and excessive out-of-pocket spending, encourages earlier diagnosis of chronic conditions, improves use of preventive services, and reduces preventable mortality.[4] As a result, undocumented and uninsured Californians live with more chronic illness, die younger, and are one emergency away from financial ruin.

This reality has tremendous health and financial impacts on not just the uninsured but their families, the public health and economic vitality of the broader community, and our state's health system. By removing immigration status as an eligibility barrier to Medi-Cal, California can build a more universal, efficient, and equitable health care system for all who call California home. Health care is a human right, and our health system is stronger when everyone is included.

For more information, please contact California Immigrant Policy Center's Director of Government Affairs, Alexis Castro (acastro@caimmigrant.org) and Health Access' Policy and Legislative Advocate Jose Torres (jtorres@health-access.org).

1   https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/undocumented-californians-projected-to-remain-the-largest-group-of-uninsured-in-the-state-in-2022/
2   https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4423
3   https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Pages/Medi-CalFAQs2014b.aspx#3
4   Dietz, Miranda and Laurel Lucia, et al. November 2018. "California's Health Coverage Gains to Erode Without Further State Action." UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and UC Berkeley Labor Center.

HEALTH ACCESS
California's Health Consumer Advocacy Coalition

CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT POLICY CENTER

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