

HEALTH4ALL: FULL-SCOPE MEDI-CAL FOR UNDOCUMENTED ADULTS

SB 29 (DURAZO) / AB 4 (BONTA, CHIU, & SANTIAGO)

Everyone Covered – No One Left Out: Addressing California's Health Care Crisis

Undocumented Californians are facing a health care crisis. Over the last two years, the federal government has carried out harmful attacks on immigrant communities by separating families, increasing deportations, and undermining our health care system and safety net. This has resulted in serious trauma that is affecting the physical and mental well-being of many Californians. It is critical that our state take action now to protect the health of all low-income Californians, regardless of where they were born. Undocumented adults have contributed to our economy and social fabric for decades. They are 10% of our workforce and are parents to 1 in 6 children in California.ⁱ Undocumented Californians are raising our future leaders and powering the economy, yet every day they are hurting because they lack access to health care.

SB 29/AB 4 would provide full-scope Medi-Cal to income-eligible adults by removing immigration status as an eligibility exclusion.

Californians Barred from Health Care: Undocumented & Uninsured

The UC Berkeley Labor Center projects that 1.4 million Californians will be barred from health care due to their immigration status, making undocumented Californians the largest single group of uninsured individuals in the state.ⁱⁱ Federal law explicitly excludes undocumented immigrants from receiving health coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Under current state law, low-income undocumented adults are only eligible for emergency (“restricted-scope”) Medi-Cal.

Lack of access to health coverage harms immigrant communities and our health care system. Health insurance protects individuals from financial distress and excessive out-of-pocket spending, encourages earlier diagnosis of chronic conditions, improves use of preventive services, and reduces preventable mortality.ⁱⁱⁱ No one in our state should have to wait until an emergency to be able to access health care.

Following the success of Health4AllKids, which since 2016 has expanded comprehensive health coverage to over 250,000 children in Medi-Cal^{iv}, SB 29 and AB 4 are the next logical steps to close a large remaining gap in our health care system.

While the federal government attempts to increase health disparities based on race and immigration status, California can fight to defend our progress and ensure no Californian goes without life-saving health coverage, by removing immigration status as an eligibility barrier to Medi-Cal. Health care is a human right, and our health system is stronger when everyone is included.



For more information, please contact Deepen Gagneja (dgagneja@caimmigrant.org) with the California Immigrant Policy Center and Ronald Coleman (rcoleman@health-access.org) with Health Access California.

i Kenney, Genevieve M., Jennifer M. Haley, and Robin Wang. December 2018. “Proposed Public Charge Rule Could Jeopardize Recent Coverage Gains among Citizen Children.” Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

ii 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.

iii p 6. Dietz & Lucia.

iv Department of Health Care Services. 2017. SB 75 Transitions and New Enrollees by County. Retrieved from: https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Documents/SB75_SB75_Enrollees_County_120417.pdf