



May 12, 2021

The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair  
Assembly Budget Committee  
State Capitol, Rm 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair  
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
State Capitol, Rm 5019  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Health4All - Expand Medi-Cal Coverage for All Income-Eligible Californians Regardless of Immigration Status**

Dear Chair Ting and Chair Skinner:

We write to respectfully request the allocation of \$2.1 billion from the General Fund on an ongoing basis to expand full scope Medi-Cal coverage to all income-eligible Californians, regardless of immigration status.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit frontline and essential workers especially hard, including millions of undocumented immigrants taking on a disproportionate risk of exposure. The pandemic has further exacerbated racial and ethnic health disparities and made it clear that access to comprehensive health care is necessary for every resident of our state. We know that most undocumented adults who are uninsured fall ill more often, die younger, and are one emergency away from financial ruin because they do not have access to comprehensive health coverage.<sup>1</sup> It is critical that our state act now to protect the health of all low-income Californians, regardless of where they were born.

Recent peer-reviewed research from the University of Southern California found significant disproportionate impacts in rates of COVID-19 mortality in California across racial/ethnic groups and nativity.<sup>2</sup> In particular, Hispanic immigrants aged 20-64 were nearly 11 times more likely to die than their white counterparts -- dying at greater rates than any other group studied.

The Legislative Analyst Office recently published a budget and policy post that estimates the costs associated with expanding comprehensive Medi-Cal coverage to eligible Californians, regardless of their immigration status.<sup>3</sup> California's undocumented immigrants make significant contributions to state and local revenues, paying an estimated \$3.2 billion annually in state and local taxes.<sup>4</sup> We must end the unjust exclusion of immigrants from access to the health care system they pay into.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Garcia et al. "COVID-19 mortality in California based on death certificates: disproportionate impacts across racial/ethnic groups and nativity." *Annals of Epidemiology*. 2021 March 18; 58:69-75.

<sup>3</sup> [Estimated Cost of Expanding Full-Scope Medi-Cal Coverage to All Otherwise-Eligible Californians Regardless of Immigration Status](#). Legislative Analyst's Office.

<sup>4</sup> California Budget & Policy Center - [California's Undocumented Immigrants Make Significant Contributions to State and Local Revenues](#)

**In an effort to reach this goal, we respectfully request a commitment from Governor Newsom and our Legislative Leadership to put Health4All in statute this year to end the exclusion by 2026. We additionally request a significant down payment of \$770 million from the General Fund to support expansion of full scope Medi-Cal to our immigrant communities as follows: \$370 million for ages 50-64 and \$400 million for ages 65 and over.**

After battling through the pandemic of the century, now is the time to provide these tax-paying Californians – who have contributed to our economy and social fabric for decades – with the resources they need to be safe and healthy. We must protect all Californians.

Simply put, the health of each of us depends on the health of all of us.

Sincerely,



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DR. JOAQUIN ARAMBULA  
Assemblymember, 31<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



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MARIA ELENA DURAZO  
Senator, 24<sup>th</sup> Senate District

CC: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins  
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon  
Tam Ma, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Keely Martin Bosler, Director, Department of Finance  
Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health and Human Services  
Will Lightbourne, Director, Department of Health Care Services  
Jacey Cooper, State Medicaid Director, Department of Health Care Services