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PRESS RELEASE

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HEALTH ACCESS CALIFORNIA RELEASES 2015 LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD; REVEALS HOW CALIFORNIA LEGISLATORS VOTED ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

- *On eve of deadline for introducing legislation in 2016, new scorecard evaluates how legislators voted on key 2015 impacting California's health and health care*
- *Legislators span from 100% to 0% on their support for patient protections against unfair out-of-pocket costs, coverage expansions and tobacco control public health measures*
- *Votes matter: one still-pending bill, AB533, to prevent surprise medical bills, was only a few votes away from full passage. Legislators still have a chance this year to prevent Californians still getting these unfair out-of-network charges of hundreds or thousands of dollars*

Today, Health Access California released its [2015 Legislative Scorecard](#) which evaluates and scores California legislators' voting record on critical health care policies. The scorecard rates legislators based on how they voted on key health care consumer issues during the last legislative session.

The scorecard reports on key pieces of legislation sponsored and supported by Health Access during the 2015 legislative session. These bills aimed to prevent unfair out-of-pocket costs and to expand coverage to Californians regardless of immigration status. The scorecard also examines key tobacco control bills as well as two measures to provide better oversight of health insurers. The bills scored reflect the most high-profile debates in the state legislature with the most direct impact to health care consumers.

"These votes had a direct impact on Californians' health, health care, and financial security. From preventing surprise out-of-network bills, to ensuring health insurance coverage covers critical health care services, to expanding coverage, this scorecard is a snapshot of whether legislators sided with health care consumers and supported policies to improve the health system on which we all rely," said Anthony Wright, executive director of Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition. "Californians should know how their legislators voted on health policy issues that directly impact their lives, their care, and their finances."

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One key vote that the scorecard highlights is on [AB 533](#), a bill to protect consumers from surprise out-of-network medical bills. This bill, which would ensure that patients going to an in-network hospital or facility do not get charged by out-of-network providers within that facility, fell three votes short of passage last year. Since this bill failed to pass last year, California consumers continue to receive surprise bills from out-of-network providers of hundreds or thousands of dollars.

When Sarah from Bayside, CA had a C-section in June 2015, she researched her options and chose an in-network hospital. She was surprised when she received a \$1,050 bill for the out-of-network anesthesiologist. “I’m grateful that my baby girl is healthy and that my delivery went well, but I had no idea the anesthesiologist would be out-of-network and not covered by my insurance,” shared Sarah. Health Access can provide other stories of people receiving surprise bills, a practice that continues because this bill fell just a few votes short from becoming law.

“The narrow vote on our bill to protect consumers from surprise out-of-network bills underscores the importance of every vote. Legislators have the opportunity to protect patients and improve their record on consumer legislation this year, by passing AB 533 and other consumer protection bills,” continued Wright. “We hope this scorecard is a tool to help citizens keep track of their legislators and to let legislators know that their constituents are watching their votes on key health issues.”

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