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- Anthony Wright
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COVERED CALIFORNIA BOARD TO HEAR RECOMMENDATIONS ON EXPANDING ACCESS TO UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT FAMILIES; VERIFICATION FOR SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIODS

- Board May Act on Seeking Affordable Care Act "1332 Waiver" From Federal Government
- #Health4All Advocates Seek Waiver This Year to Remove Exclusion and Allow Undocumented Californians to Buy Unsubsidized Coverage Through Covered California
- Waiver Would Require State Authorizing Legislation, Currently Pending in SB10 (Lara) Action Would Allow Hundreds of Thousands of Mixed-Status Working Families to Enroll Together
- Board Also Expected to Announce Decision on Verification for Special Enrollment Periods

SACRAMENTO--Tomorrow, the Covered California Board will receive staff recommendations on whether to pursue a federal waiver to allow all Californians regardless of immigration status to be able to buy coverage with their own money through Covered California. Currently, undocumented immigrants are barred from using the state marketplace under the ACA even when using their own money and instead must go directly to a broker or health plan to purchase health insurance. The board is also expected to make a decision on the verification and paperwork that will be required for Californians enrolling outside open enrollment, in the special enrollment periods.

What: Covered California Board of Directors Meeting

When: TOMORROW, TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2016

Open session is estimated to start at 12:00 pm

Where: Covered California

1601 Exposition Blvd., Tahoe Auditorium

Sacramento, CA 95815

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Why: Board discussion on pursuing the option to allow undocumented Californians to buy coverage through Covered California marketplace

“California has reaped the benefits of the Affordable Care Act by aggressively implementing and improving upon the federal law. Pursuing a new 1332 waiver could provide additional flexibility to go even further to expand access and affordability,” said Anthony Wright, executive director of Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition.

“Allowing undocumented immigrants to buy health insurance through Covered California removes a counterproductive exclusion in the federal law. This exclusion discourages a crucial part of our economy and society from taking responsibility for their health and finances by purchasing coverage and sends an unfortunate signal to many more,” said Wright. “Under this proposed waiver, many California families with mixed immigration status would be able to buy coverage together easily, even if some family members were eligible for subsidies and others are not. Moving forward with this waiver is not just an important symbolic step toward inclusion but would also provide additional access for thousands of Californians.”

Disseminated in February, Health Access California’s paper, “[Options and Opportunities for California: Section 1332 of the ACA](#),” analyzes possibilities California could pursue while recognizing the limits of the 1332 waiver process embedded in the Affordable Care Act and in recent federal guidance. Health Access and other consumer and immigrant groups have been advocating for allowing undocumented immigrants to buy unsubsidized health plans through Covered California through a 1332 waiver as well as through [SB 10 \(Lara\)](#).

“We look forward to Covered California’s deliberations on these important issues. Covered California should support a waiver to allow undocumented Californians to purchase coverage using their own money, which would benefit not just those families but the health system as a whole. It strengthens the health system on which we all rely when we work to ensure health care coverage is accessible for all Californians, regardless of immigration status.” said Wright.

Covered California will also review special enrollment period verification proposals. “Covered California should reject attempts to require paperwork that is unnecessary, burdensome, or that doesn’t exist for those signing up between open enrollment periods because of a life change,” said Wright. “In this age of online and electronic transactions, we should be able to do verifications without counterproductive and burdensome paperwork requirements. The lower the paperwork barriers, the broader and bigger the enrollment, which will lead to a healthier risk mix and lower premiums for everyone.”

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