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PRESS RELEASE

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HEALTH ADVOCATES CALL FOR NEEDED INVESTMENTS IN MAY REVISION OF STATE BUDGET

- Health and Patient Advocates urge Governor Brown to Include Critical Restorations and Investments for Health Care in the May Revision of his Budget to be released on Friday

On Friday, Governor Jerry Brown will release his revisions to the 2016-17 state budget which, as proposed in January, continues California's commitments for health care and health reform, but also continues the cuts made during the recession and does not make the needed investments to reduce barriers to coverage, increase access for Medi-Cal patients, or cover the remaining uninsured.

Here is comment from Anthony Wright, executive director of Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition:

RESTORATIONS TO RECESSION-ERA CUTS IN THE HEALTH BUDGET:

"Even though we are many years from the recession, the state budget largely continues the recession-era cuts to health and human services. Our reserve has been created in part from \$15 billion in HHS cuts; it's high time to restore cuts to Medi-Cal benefits and rates and other public health programs. California has yet to restore nine benefits, from podiatry to vision services, to the millions of adults with Medi-Cal coverage even though the cost would be minimal," said Anthony Wright, executive director, Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition. "California should build on the progress we made under the Affordable Care Act, by removing barriers to coverage, guaranteeing those covered in Medi-Cal have access to benefits and providers, and extending care to the remaining uninsured."

ESTATE RECOVERY: "In this budget, we should address issues that discourage enrollment and endanger low-income families' economic security. California needs to change the Medi-Cal estate recovery rules, which complicates enrollment and discourages patients from signing up for Medi-Cal coverage. Under this rule, the state can make a claim against the estate of an individual who was 55 years or older at the time he or she received Medi-Cal benefits and be reimbursed for the Medi-Cal benefits paid. The Governor has previously vetoed a bill to limit Medi-Cal estate recovery, arguing the policy change should be done in the budget instead. This budget should limit estate

recovery so some Californians don't fear that their loved ones will lose the family home as a result of signing up for coverage," said Wright. SB 33 (Hernandez) to limit estate recovery is pending in the Assembly.

IMMIGRANT HEALTH CARE: "As we celebrate the start of the initiative to cover all California children made in last year's budget, California should continue to push for health coverage for all Californians, regardless of immigration status," said Wright. "Immigrants are a vital part of our community and economy and should be fully included in our health system." SB 1418 (Lara) extends eligibility for full-scoop Medi-Cal benefits to individuals 19 years of age or older, regardless of immigration status, is currently pending in the Senate

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