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For immediate release:

May 13, 2016

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GOVERNOR'S BUDGET MAY REVISION CONTINUES HEALTH REFORM PROGRESS AND RECESSION-ERA CUTS TO HEALTH

- *Preparing for the next recession should be balanced and include undoing the damage of the last recession. Many years after the recession, budget continues recession-era cuts to health and human services, without needed restorations to public health programs, Medi-Cal health benefits, and Medicaid provider reimbursement rates, or other health investments by the state.*
- *Health advocates appreciate the progress California continues to make under the Affordable Care Act, including additional steps such as the expansion of Medi-Cal coverage for all income-eligible children regardless of immigration status on Monday. More to do to reach #Health4All.*
- *Health policy debate will continue in budget hearings and on bills to cover California's remaining uninsured regardless of immigration status (SB 1418 by Sen. Lara) and to limit Medi-Cal estate recovery (SB 33 by Sen. Hernandez), which discourages patients from enrolling and potentially risking losing family home.*
- *Voters this fall will be able to secure revenues needed to prevent cuts and make needed investments in health and other vital services, through extending existing upper-income taxes and by increasing the tobacco tax.*

Earlier today, Governor Jerry Brown released the May Revision to the proposed 2016-17 state budget, which continues California's commitments on health care and health reform, but also maintains the cuts made during the recession, and doesn't make investments needed to reduce barriers to coverage, increase access for Medi-Cal patients, or cover the remaining uninsured. Here's reaction from executive director Anthony Wright of Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition:

NO RESTORATIONS TO RECESSION-ERA CUTS IN THE HEALTH BUDGET: "The Governor's proposal continues many recession-era cuts to health and human services. California needs a better balance between preparing for the possibility of the next recession and the unfinished work of undoing the damage from the last recession. After \$15 billion in HHS cuts, it's high time to restore cuts to Medi-Cal benefits and rates and other public health programs," said Wright. "California should invest in removing

barriers to coverage, ensuring Medi-Cal patients have access to benefits and providers, and extending care to the remaining uninsured."

CONTINUING THE PROGRESS UNDER HEALTH REFORM: "Californians should be proud of the progress our health system has made under the Affordable Care Act and, starting Monday, for the Medi-Cal expansion to all children regardless of immigration status. We should continue the momentum to improve the health system on which we all rely," said Wright. "We appreciate that this budget delays shifting new legal immigrants from Medi-Cal to Covered California until technical and administrative issues are resolved, which will prevent some of these individuals from inadvertently losing coverage."

ESTATE RECOVERY: "This budget does not address some key policy issues, such as Medi-Cal estate recovery. It's disappointing the budget does not remove the estate recovery provision that discourages patients from signing up for Medi-Cal coverage. The Governor previously vetoed a bill to limit Medi-Cal estate recovery, arguing the policy change should be done in the budget instead. We will vigorously pursue this change, so some older Californians won't need to fear that their loved ones will lose the family home as a result of signing up for health coverage," said Wright. SB 33 (Hernandez), which would limit Medi-Cal estate recovery, is pending in the Assembly.

IMMIGRANT HEALTH CARE: "We should build on the commitment to care for all California children made in last year's budget, and we will continue to push this year for all Californians to have access to coverage, 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), which would extend access to health care to all Californians regardless of immigration status, is pending in the Assembly.

REVENUES ON THE BALLOT THIS FALL: "We haven't restored the cuts made since the last recession--it's imperative that voters this fall prevent additional cuts to HHS programs by extending existing upper-income taxes, and allowing California to make needed investments in health care with revenues from a tobacco tax. By extending the existing rate on high-income earners and increasing the tobacco tax, Californians can prevent cuts to vital services and make the investments needed in the health care system on which we all rely."

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