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For immediate release:

Friday, June 27, 2016

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WITH BUDGET SIGNING, MEDI-CAL MANAGED CARE ENROLLEES NO LONGER SHOULD FEAR LOSS OF FAMILY HOME; BUDGET DEBATE SHIFTS TO VOTERS THIS FALL WITH KEY BALLOT MEASURES

* ***Governor Brown, in signing 2016-17 State #CABudget, highlighted items to counter poverty, including minimum wage increase, repealing the "maximum family grant" policy, and limiting Medi-Cal estate recovery.***

* ***Under new budget, low-income families on Medi-Cal managed care no longer need to worry about losing the family home; Budget limits Medi-Cal estate recovery to long-term care, no longer discouraging or penalizing Medi-Cal managed care enrollees from savings or signing up for coverage.***

* ***Broader budget debate now shifts to voters. Voters this fall will be able to secure revenues needed to prevent health cuts and make needed investments in health and other vital services, through extending existing upper-income taxes and by increasing the tobacco tax.***

Today, Governor Jerry Brown signed a 2016-17 state budget, which makes some progress in restoring and improving the state's safety-net for low-income people--but that also maintains many of the health cuts made during the recession to many public health programs, Medi-Cal health benefits, and Medicaid provider reimbursement rates. The effort to restore and improve Medi-Cal now shifts to the voters, who have two ballot measures to consider this fall. Here's reaction from executive director Anthony Wright of Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition:

VICTORY ON MEDI-CAL ESTATE RECOVERY: "The Governor appropriately highlighted the budget's steps to countering poverty, including the minimum wage, repealing the maximum family grant policy, and limiting the counterproductive Medi-Cal estate recovery policy," said Wright. "We are pleased that under this budget, California families that sign up for Medi-Cal managed care no longer have to worry about losing the family home. The budget rightly limits Medi-Cal estate recovery to align with 40 other states and the federal government, so we no longer penalize and discourage low-income families from saving or signing up for health coverage."

BUDGET FIGHT NOW SHIFTS TO BALLOT THIS FALL: "After \$15 billion in HHS cuts during the recession seven years ago, we still haven't restored many of the cuts made to Medi-Cal or other vital services, Even with the progress in the new budget, it still continues recession-era cuts to health services, from Medi-Cal benefits to rates, impacting access for millions of Californians." said Wright. "The passage of this budget shifts the decision about whether to restore and improve our health system to the voters, who have key ballot measure to consider this fall. California voters can prevent additional cuts to health and other vital 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 we all depend on."

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About Health Access

Health Access California is the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition, advocating for the goal of quality, affordable health care for all Californians. Health Access Foundation undertakes community organizing and education, applied research, and policy analysis, and advocates for reform to benefit health care consumers, both insured and uninsured. We represent consumers in the legislature, at administrative and regulatory agencies, in the media, and at public forums. For more info, please visit <http://www.health-access.org>.