

SB4 #Health4All (Lara) Cover the Remaining Uninsured



Immigrants are an essential part of California's economy, a key presence in our communities. They should therefore be fully included in our health care system. We all benefit when all Californians have access to primary and preventive care and affordable health care coverage. For this reason, Health Access California, together with a broad and diverse coalition, has made [SB4](#) (Sen. Ricardo Lara) a top priority for the 2015 Legislative Session.

The Need for SB4

Undocumented immigrants are explicitly excluded from eligibility and financial help for comprehensive coverage under many federal programs, including Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. Nor can they use the state marketplace, Covered California, to buy coverage using their own money. While some California counties serve the undocumented in their safety net systems, too many do not.ⁱ

Our health care system and economy work better when everyone has coverage, providing access to primary and preventive care and preventing families from facing

severe medical debt. One way the new insurance marketplaces keep costs down is by pooling the risk of enrollees. Since immigrants tend to be younger and healthier, including them in our health care system helps lower the average premium costs of the whole insurance pool.ⁱⁱ

What SB4 Does

[SB4](#) states that it is the intent of the Legislature that all Californians, regardless of immigration status, have the same access to coverage, and the same help with affordability. Details on this initiative will be coming soon.

Call to Action

With the start of the legislative session the campaign is about to move very fast. You can help build the groundswell of support for SB4. Here's what you can do now:

1. [Share stories](#) describing the need for #Health4All.
2. Write a letter to your legislator.
3. Like the [Health4All Facebook page](#) to track opportunities for ongoing action.
4. Follow [#Health4All](#), sponsored by The California Endowment.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should California cover all undocumented immigrants?

Our health care system is stronger and more effective when everybody has access to primary, preventive, and specialty care. The uninsured will typically delay care until conditions become more expensive to treat. Some will show up in the emergency room, adding to uncompensated care costs and the existing burden on the safety net.

What is the impact of President Obama's executive order in California?

It broadens the category of immigrants eligible for "deferred action" relief, and thus for Medi-Cal in California. While restricted from federal Medicaid, this group is eligible for state-funded Medi-Cal coverage, just like the "DREAM Act" youth with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. However, the President's executive action only can go so far, and some of those eligible for "deferred action" status will fail to gain that status due to enrollment barriers, including fees and documentation requirements.

How many undocumented immigrants would be helped by SB4?

Around 1 million of the estimated 3-4 million remaining uninsured Californians

ⁱ http://www.health-access.org/images/pdfs/CAunevenSafetyNet_countysurvey_Nov2013.pdf

ⁱⁱ <http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/Documents/PDF/2014/ensuringundocbrief-may2014.pdf>

are undocumented immigrants.ⁱⁱⁱ A subset of these individuals are already eligible to enroll in state-funded Medi-Cal, thanks to President Obama's recent executive order. Others will gain employment-based coverage as their job prospects (and income) improve as a result of their new official status.

Do voters support coverage for undocumented immigrants?

Yes, a recent bipartisan statewide survey of California voters found that a majority of California voters (54%) support expanding health care programs to cover all low-income Californians, regardless of immigration status.^{iv} Among the fastest growing segments of the electorate the support is even stronger: 65% for voters of color and 62% for voters under age 50.

Health Access
1127 11th St, Suite 234
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 497-0923
www.health-access.org
blog.health-access.org

SB4 #Health4All

ⁱⁱⁱ http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/healthcare/aca_uninsured.shtml

^{iv} http://www.calendow.org/uploadedFiles/Health_Happenings_Here/FM3-GS_Strat-Final%20Memo.pdf

