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Organizations listed for identification purposes

@HealthAccess
www.health-access.org

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Contact: Anthony Wright, executive director Health Access
awright@health-access.org, 916-870-4782 (cell)

Carolina Gamero, California Immigrant Policy Center
cgamero@caimmigrant.org, 310-893-9038 (cell)

ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE TO VOTE TOMORROW ON SB 10 (LARA) TO ALLOW UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS TO BUY HEALTH PLANS THROUGH COVERED CALIFORNIA

- *Consumer and Immigrant Groups Call On Legislators to Remove Exclusion and Allow Undocumented Californians to Buy Unsubsidized Coverage Through Covered California*
- *Covered California Report Cleared Way for a "1332 Waiver," Which Still Requires State Authorizing Legislation, Which Has Previously Received Bipartisan Votes in California*
- *Waiver Would Symbolize Inclusion, Allow Mixed-Status Working Families to Enroll Together*

SACRAMENTO, CA—Tomorrow, the Assembly Health Committee will vote on a measure that would remove a critical barrier to Covered California and allow all Californians to access the state marketplace, regardless of immigration status. [SB 10 \(Lara\)](#) would require the state to apply for a federal waiver that would allow undocumented immigrants to buy health coverage through Covered California using their own money.

Currently, undocumented immigrants are barred from using the state marketplace under the Affordable Care Act even when using their own money and instead must go directly to a broker or health plan to purchase health insurance. During its April board meeting, a Covered California staff report gave the green light to pursue this waiver from the federal government and is awaiting direction from the Legislature and Governor.

“Allowing all Californians to buy health insurance through Covered California regardless of immigration status removes a counterproductive exclusion in the federal law. This proposal is not just a benefit for working immigrant families to more easily sign up for coverage, but would be a boon for the health system on which we all rely. Our health system and economy is stronger when everyone is included and has access to primary and preventive care and the financial security that comes with coverage.” said Anthony

Wright, executive director of Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition. "Beyond the important symbolism of inclusion, this proposal will provide a practical benefit for many California families with mixed immigration status, who will be able to buy coverage together easily, even if some family members are eligible for subsidies and others are not."

"This proposal will break down a barrier to health care coverage by allowing mixed-status families to enroll in coverage together," said Cynthia Buiza, executive director of the California Immigrant Policy Center. "We urge our legislators to support SB 10 and allow all family members to review and purchase plans together so that California can move closer to ensuring that no one is excluded from coverage no matter where they were born. We are all healthier when we are all covered."

Under "1332 waivers," the federal government can allow states to change certain aspects of the Affordable Care Act, as long as the state can show it will meet the same goals of number of people covered, affordability, comprehensiveness of coverage, and cost to the federal government. This relatively minor 1332 waiver proposal was a part of last year's SB 4 (Lara), which got bipartisan support in the Senate, with two Republican votes along with unanimous Democratic support. Both Democratic presidential candidates have endorsed the concept of allowing undocumented immigrant to buy coverage using state exchanges, as have several members of Congress who have sponsored the HEAL Act, which is currently pending in Congress.

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