



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Brian Allison  
AFSCME
- Nancy "Nan" Brasmer  
CA Alliance for Retired Americans
- Kathy Ko Chin  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
- Lori Easterling  
CA Teachers Association
- Stewart Ferry  
National MS Society – MS CA Action Network
- Aaron Fox  
Los Angeles LGBT Center
- Roma Guy  
CA Women's Agenda
- Betsy Imholz  
Consumers Union
- Paul Knepprath  
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of CA
- Henry "Hank" Lacayo  
Congress of CA Seniors
- Ted Lempert  
Children Now
- Christina Livingston  
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment
- Joshua Pechthalt  
CA Federation of Teachers
- Art Pulaski  
CA Labor Federation
- Emily Rusch  
CALPIRG
- Thomas Saenz  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
- Cary Sanders  
CA Pan-Ethnic Health Network
- Reshma Shamasunder  
CA Immigrant Policy Center
- Joan Pirkle Smith  
Americans for Democratic Action
- Horace Williams  
CA Black Health Network
- Sonya Young  
CA Black Women's Health Project
- Jon Youngdahl  
SEIU State Council
- Anthony Wright  
Executive Director

Organizations listed for identification purposes

@HealthAccess

[www.health-access.org](http://www.health-access.org)

For immediate release:

Monday, June 27, 2016

### Contact:

*Anthony Wright, executive director Health Access*

[awright@health-access.org](mailto:awright@health-access.org), 916-870-4782 (cell)

*Rachel Linn-Gish, Director of Communications, Health Access California,*

[rlinngish@health-access.org](mailto:rlinngish@health-access.org); 916-532-2128 (cell)

## CONSUMER GROUPS GEAR UP FOR CRUCIAL VOTE TOMORROW ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG COST LEGISLATION & OTHER KEY PATIENT RIGHTS BILLS TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY.

- *On Tuesday, Assembly Health Committee to Vote on Key Bills, Including SB1010 (Hernandez) to Win Notice and Disclosure of Prescription Drug Costs—Despite Over-The-Top Opposition from Big Pharma.*
- *Other Key Bills Facing Crucial Committee Votes Tuesday Would Provide Notice of Unreasonable Consumer Premium Rates (SB908); and Inform Patients of Their Right to Timely Appointments and Medical Interpretation (SB1135).*
- *On Wednesday, Senate Health Committee Will Vote on New Bipartisan Legislation to Prevent Surprise Medical Bills, so Californians Don't Face Unfair Out-of-Network Charges. AB72 (Bonta, Bonilla, Dahle, Gonzalez, Maienschein, Santiago, & Wood) Seeks to Break Logjam from Last Year's AB533 Fight with the California Medical Association.*

SACRAMENTO, CA—Tomorrow and Wednesday, the Assembly and Senate Health Committees will vote on crucial legislation to protect patients from unfair health care costs, most notably the heavily lobbied SB1010 (Hernandez) to provide notice and disclosure on prescription drug costs. Other key bills sponsored by consumer advocates up for key votes this week would help prevent unfair and unreasonable health care bills, premiums, and cost-sharing, inform consumers of their rights and options, stop surprise medical bills, and increase transparency to address the rising cost of care.

“California consumers correctly complain about unfair health care costs, from unjustified premium hikes to surprise out-of-network charges to rising drug prices. With their votes this week, California legislators can put patients first and provide real relief from these unfair health costs,” said Anthony Wright, executive director, **Health Access California**, the sponsor of several pending patients’ rights bills. “The proposed transparency legislation would better inform California consumers about the rising cost of prescription drugs and their choices when charged with an unreasonable premium hike, as well as their rights to get a timely appointment or a medical interpreter.”

Up tomorrow for a crucial vote in Assembly Health Committee is **SB 1010 (Hernandez)** to provide transparency to soaring prescription drug prices for both public and private purchasers, as well as greater disclosure of prescription drug cost trends. In particular, the bill would require notice for prescription drug price hikes. “California law requires similar notice and disclosure for almost every other part of the health system--this modest bill would simply ask the same for the prescription drug companies,” continued Wright. “With the recent unexplained price hikes in key prescription drugs recently, it's a fair question to ask what Big Pharma is hiding, with their over-the-top attacks on this modest legislation.”

Tuesday’s Assembly Health Committee is also slated to vote on two other bills: **SB908 (Hernandez)** would inform Californians if the health plan they are in is charging a premium hike that is determined to be “unreasonable” or “unjustified,” and give consumers time to shop for another plan, and **SB1135 (Monning)**, which would inform consumers of their right to a timely appointment and care in the language they speak.

On Wednesday, the Senate Health Committee will hear the new **AB 72 (Bonta, Bonilla, Dahle, Gonzalez, Maienschein, Santiago, and Wood)**, a bipartisan proposal to protect patients from surprise medical bills when they go to in-network hospitals and facilities. Co-sponsored by Health Access California and the California Labor Federation, the new version seeks to remove the logjam of last year’s fight on AB533, which stalled by just three votes. Since the failure of the legislature to act, California consumers have continued to receive surprise medical bills of hundreds or thousands of dollars from out-of-network providers after using in-network medical facilities. After months of negotiations among lawmakers, advocates, and insurers, the revised legislation will include even stronger consumer protections to stop these surprise bills while paying doctors 125% of Medicare (or average contracted rate) rather than 100% of Medicare as proposed in AB533.

“We appreciate the new legislative effort so that no Californian who follows the rules of their health plan and goes to an in-network hospital face surprise out-of-network bills of hundreds of thousands of dollars,” said Wright. “A broad coalition of consumer, insurer, and labor groups have come together to prevent patients from surprise bills. With this new bipartisan proposal, we hope that real relief for patients' is on the way.”

**Reference materials:**

[2016 Patients’ Rights Legislation fact sheet](#)

[Fact sheets and materials on all Health Access California sponsored legislation](#)

[Surprise medical bills consumer stories](#)