

## Health4All: Full-Scope Medi-Cal for Undocumented Seniors SB 29 (Durazo)

### Everyone Covered – No One Left Out: Addressing California's Health Care Crisis

Undocumented Californians are facing a health care crisis. Over the last few years, the federal government has carried out harmful attacks on immigrant communities by separating families, increasing deportations, and undermining our health care system and safety net. This has resulted in serious trauma that is affecting the physical and mental well-being of many Californians. Yet in the face of this critical situation, over one million undocumented Californians who would otherwise be eligible for the comprehensive services provided under Medi-Cal remain unjustly excluded simply because of where they were born.

SB 29 (Durazo) would continue California's leadership in providing health care to undocumented Californians by becoming the first state to provide full-scope Medi-Cal to undocumented seniors age 65 and over.

Undocumented adults make up nearly 10% of our workforce and are parents to 1 in 6 children in California.<sup>i</sup> These Californians are raising our future leaders and powering the economy by contributing over \$3 billion in state and local taxes annually. Undocumented seniors who have worked tirelessly for decades to support our state and families continue to be locked out of receiving the health care they desperately need.

### Californians Barred from Health Care: Undocumented & Uninsured

The UC Berkeley Labor Center projects that 1.4 million Californians will be barred from health care due to their immigration status, making undocumented Californians the largest single group of uninsured individuals in the state<sup>ii</sup>. Federal law explicitly excludes undocumented immigrants from receiving health coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Under current state law, low-income undocumented adults are only eligible for emergency ("restricted-scope") Medi-Cal.

Lack of access to health coverage harms immigrant communities and our health care system. Health insurance protects individuals from financial distress and excessive out-of-pocket spending, encourages earlier diagnosis of chronic conditions, improves use of preventive services, and reduces preventable mortality.<sup>iii</sup> No one in our state should have to wait until an emergency to be able to access health care.

Following the success of covering all undocumented children and young adults up to age 26, SB 29 is the next logical steps to close a large remaining gap in our health care system.

While the federal government attempts to deepen health disparities based on race and immigration status, California can continue to lower our uninsured rate by expanding Medi-Cal access to undocumented seniors. Health care is a human right, and our health system is stronger when everyone is included.

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<sup>i</sup> Kenney, Genevieve M., Jennifer M. Haley, and Robin Wang. December 2018. "[Proposed Public Charge Rule Could Jeopardize Recent Coverage Gains among Citizen Children.](#)" Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

<sup>ii</sup> Dietz, Miranda and Laurel Lucia, et al. November 2018. "[California's Health Coverage Gains to Erode Without Further State Action.](#)" UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and UC Berkeley Labor Center.

<sup>iii</sup> p 6. Dietz & Lucia.