

Over the past decade, the Health4All Coalition led a successful campaign to eliminate barriers for undocumented Californians to Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program. This achievement brings us closer than ever to a universal health care system for all who call California home.

When looking for health coverage, lawfully present Californians who have incomes that exceed the Medi-Cal limit of 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (about \$20,000 a year for an individual) can turn to Covered California, the state's ACA-mandated health insurance marketplace. However, over 520,000 undocumented Californians who earn too much for Medi-Cal are explicitly excluded from Covered California and remain uninsured.<sup>1</sup> Over 100,000 other undocumented Californians are covered, but have had to enroll via the individual marketplace. This creates an unfair health coverage system where many families continue to face barriers to getting the care that they need simply because of their immigration status.

### Health4All Solution: Create a marketplace that mirrors Covered California, but without exclusions for undocumented Californians

The Health4All coalition proposes to end these unjust exclusions by establishing a state-funded and state-operated "mirror" marketplace. To achieve this, a budget allocation of *at least \$15 million* is needed to fund the initial start-up costs. Similar to Covered California, once the mirror marketplace is up and running with a critical mass of enrollees, General Fund investment will not be needed as it will be funded through assessment fees on health plans. Though future advocacy will include funding requests for affordability subsidies to ensure that everyone shopping on the Covered California mirror marketplace is actually able to afford their coverage, the first step is to create the marketplace.

### Mirror Marketplace Concept

The Covered California "mirror" marketplace would offer health plans to undocumented individuals who are excluded by federal law from shopping for coverage on Covered California. These plans would "mirror" those offered in Covered California and provide the same level of coverage. The mirror marketplace would also offer the same enrollment experience and consumer-friendly shop and compare features as the existing Covered California marketplace.

In 2020, Colorado took steps to establish its own state-funded mirror marketplace known as Colorado Connect.<sup>2</sup> It established a public benefits corporation, operated by the state's ACA-mandated marketplace known as Connect for Health Colorado (C4HC), to administer Colorado Connect. In addition to offering plans identical to those offered by C4HC, Colorado Connect offered 10,000 fully subsidized plans in 2023 and 11,000 in 2024.<sup>3</sup>

Since a mirror marketplace is fully financed by state funds, it has the ability to serve all state residents, regardless of immigration status. As a result, the Health4All campaign sees the mirror marketplace approach as a viable option to extend Covered California coverage to over 600,000 income-eligible undocumented Californians who are currently excluded.

For comments or questions, please contact:

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<sup>1</sup> Dietz, Miranda and Laurel Lucia, et al. March 2023. "[California's Uninsured in 2024](#)". UC Berkeley Labor Center.

<sup>2</sup> Pohl, Et al. June 2023. "[Evaluation of the Colorado Health Insurance Affordability Enterprise FY 2022/23](#)". Mathematica.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*