

What is at Stake for Medi-Cal under a Trump Presidency?

Donald Trump vowed during his campaign to “repeal and replace” the Affordable Care Act. The Republican leadership in Congress shares in this goal. According to a fiscal outlook report from the state’s Legislative Analyst’s Office released on November 16, California is currently receiving approximately \$15.3 billion in additional funding for the expanded Medi-Cal program that resulted from passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Over 5 million Californians now have comprehensive health coverage through Medi-Cal due to the implementation of the ACA.

In addition, House Republicans and others have proposed further funding cuts to state Medicaid programs in the form of block grants or per capita caps on enrollment. Such funding cuts would require either eliminating groups of people eligible for Medi-Cal or eliminating the scope of services available. These types of revisions to the Medicaid Act could eliminate the entitlement portion of Medi-Cal, changing many of the rules that affect how the rights of Medi-Cal beneficiaries can be enforced.

Below is a summary of the improvements the ACA has brought to Medi-Cal which may now be at risk.

Enhancements to Medi-Cal as a Direct Result of the ACA	Status
Expansion Adults. Allows adults without dependent children, including many homeless and near-homeless adults, to enroll in full-scope Medi-Cal.	Under threat if federal funds are cut or portions of the ACA are repealed.
Increases Income Limits for Parents/Caretaker Relatives. Increases the income limit for adults with dependent children to enroll in full-scope Medi-Cal.	
Extends Coverage for Former Foster Youth. Covers former foster youth up to age 26 – essentially matching the protection for children to stay on their parents’ policies until age 26 in the private market.	
Enhances Benefits for Pregnant Women. Clarifies that women in Medi-Cal’s pregnancy program can access all essential health benefits, and not just those benefits affecting the health of the unborn child.	Under threat if CMS rescinds guidance requiring coverage of all essential health benefits.
Easier Enrollment Channels. Simplifies enrollment into the Medi-Cal program through the use of express lane enrollment for CalFresh recipients and hospital presumptive eligibility allowing temporary enrollment where care is received.	Under threat if portions of the ACA are repealed.
Lessens Burden of Paperwork. Allows for many people to enroll in Medi-Cal without needing to submit <i>any</i> documents due to the use of electronic verification of income and eliminating the assets tests for many Medi-Cal programs	
Reduces Administrative Burden. Reduces administrative procedures for counties processing renewals due to the use of electronic verification and the elimination of the assets tests for many Medi-Cal programs; safeguards beneficiaries’ access to services in the process.	
Behavioral Health Benefits. Expands the benefits available to Medi-Cal recipients, including increased benefits for mental health services and substance abuse treatment.	
Health Home Benefit. Adds the Health Home benefit to provide better care coordination and social support services for persons with chronic illnesses starting in July 2017.	

Additional improvements to the Medi-Cal program that California built on to the ACA	Status
Lawfully Present Immigrants. Coverage for lawfully present immigrants who are excluded by the federal law.	Under threat as state funds are needed to backfill federal funding cuts.
Expand Scope of Benefits to All Children. Coverage for all eligible children regardless of immigration status.	
Additional Dental Care for Adults. The restoration of some adult dental benefits that were previously cut.	
Lowered Estate Recovery. The elimination of some uses of estate recovery rules that dissuaded eligible people from enrolling.	
Recognition of DACA Status. Coverage for young people with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) immigration status.	Under threat as state funds are needed to backfill federal funding cuts and/or DACA status is eliminated.
Streamline Children’s Coverage. Integration of the Children’s Health Insurance Program into the Medi-Cal program allowing families to more seamlessly move between these programs as income changes.	CHIP funding is up for renewal in September and could potentially be cut.

Improvements yet to come via the Medi-Cal 2020 1115 Waiver	Status
Substance Use Disorder Services. Expanding the availability of services for substance use disorders under the Drug Medi-Cal – Organized Delivery System.	Under threat if waiver is rescinded or renegotiated.
Payment Reform to Improve Care for the Uninsured. Establishing a pilot program with public hospitals to establish a payment structure that rewards higher-value care and improves the care provided to uninsured patients (Global Payment Program).	
Integrating Health Systems. Establishing pilot programs in counties across the state to provide coordinated health care and social supports to high-utilizers with multiple chronic conditions and negative social determinants of health, such as persons who are homeless (Whole Person Care).	