

Health Care Legislation Affecting Low-Income Consumers as of March 10, 2021

The deadline for bills to be introduced was February 19. The first Assembly Health bill hearing will be March 23 and the first Senate Health bill hearing will be March 10. As the deadline for bills with fiscal cost to pass out of policy committee for house of origin looms on April 30, many bills will be given additional depth and substance. Following is a summary of bills in the Legislature that affect the health of low-income Californians.

Medi-Cal

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 4	Arambula	Medi-Cal: eligibility.	Assembly Health	This bill would expand full-scope Medi-Cal to all income-eligible adults regardless of immigration status.	Support
AB 32	Aguiar-Curry	Telehealth.	Assembly Health	This bill would make permanent certain COVID19 telehealth flexibilities.	
AB 112	Holden	Medi-Cal eligibility.	Assembly Health	Requires suspension of Medi-Cal eligibility for 3 years instead of 1 year while incarcerated.	
AB 368	Bonta	Medically supportive food.	Assembly Health	Establishes a 3-county pilot program (including Alameda) to provide food prescriptions for medically-supportive food to Medi-Cal plan enrollees experiencing food insecurity with specified chronic health conditions (e.g. diabetes and hypertension).	
AB 369	Kamlager	Medi-Cal: street medicine and utilization controls.	Assembly Health	Would, until January 1, 2026, prohibit the Director of the State Department of Health Care Services from imposing prior authorization or other utilization controls on an item, service, or immunization that is intended to test for, prevent, treat, or mitigate COVID-19.	
AB 382	Kamlager	Whole Child Model program.	Assembly Health	This bill would extend the Whole Child Model stakeholder advisory group from the end of 2021 to end of 2023.	
AB 470	Carrillo	Medi-Cal: eligibility.	Assembly	Eliminates the consideration of assets for the purpose of determining Medi-Cal eligibility.	Co-Sponsor
AB 540	Petrie-Norris	Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly.	Assembly Aging & Long-Term Care	This bill would exempt PACE beneficiary from active or passive enrollment in Medi-Cal managed care and ensure PACE is presented as an enrollment option.	
AB 563	Berman	School-based health programs.	Assembly Education	This bill would establish an Office of School-Based Health Programs to provide technical assistance, outreach, and informational materials to local schools on allowable services and on the submission of claims related to the delivery of school-based Medi-Cal services.	
AB 671	Wood	Medi-Cal: pharmacy benefits.	Assembly Health	This bill would authorize DHCS to provide a disease management or similar payment to a pharmacy to dispense a specialty drug to Medi-Cal beneficiaries in an amount necessary to ensure beneficiary access.	

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AB 733	Chiu	Dental hygienists: registered dental hygienist in alternative practice.	Assembly	This bill would declare legislative intent to allow registered dental hygienists in alternative practice to partner with medical professionals in medical settings to provide fluoride treatments and oral health education to children and pregnant people enrolled in Medi-Cal.	
AB 848	Calderon	Medi-Cal: monthly maintenance amount: personal and incidental needs.	Assembly Health	Increases the monthly maintenance amount for personal and incidental needs from \$35 to \$80 for Medi-Cal beneficiaries in nursing homes or PACE, to be adjusted annually per the consumer price index.	
AB 875	Wood	Medi-Cal: covered benefits.	Assembly Health	CalAIM spot bill.	
AB 942	Wood	Specialty mental health services and substance use disorder treatment.	Assembly Health	CalAIM spot bill.	
AB 1050	Gray	Medi-Cal: application for enrollment: prescription drugs.	Assembly Health	This bill would require the Medi-Cal applicants to agree to receive standard forms of communication, including Free to End User text, and requires DHCS to adopt regulations to establish and implement a mechanism to retrospectively identify 340B drugs.	
AB 1355	Levine	Medi-Cal: Independent Medical Review System.	Assembly Health	This bill would expand the Independent Medical Review for all Medi-Cal service denials based on medical necessity.	Sponsor
SB 56	Durazo	Medi-Cal: eligibility.	Senate Health	This bill would expand full-scope Medi-Cal to all income-eligible elders age 65 and older regardless of immigration status.	Support
SB 226	Pan	Medi-Cal: County of Sacramento.	Senate Health	THIS bill would establish a local health authority to designate plans to serve as Medi-Cal managed care plans in Sacramento County.	Support
SB 256	Pan	Medi-Cal: covered benefits.	Senate Health	CalAIM spot bill.	
SB 279	Pan	Specialty mental health services and substance use disorder treatment.	Senate Health	CalAIM spot bill.	
SB 281	Dodd	Medi-Cal: California Community Transitions program.	Senate Health	This bill would make the Community Care Transitions Program permanent and reduce time needed to have resided in a Skilled Nursing Facility to 60 days, even after COVID. Sponsors: East Bay Innovations and DRC	Support
SB 316	Eggman	Medi-Cal: federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics.	Senate Health	This bill would allow community health center to bill Medi-Cal for two visits if a patient is provided behavioral health services on the same day they receive other medical services.	Support
SB 717	Dodd	Custom rehabilitation technology service providers: payment.	Senate Health	This bill would exempt providers of custom rehabilitation equipment and custom rehabilitation technology services from 10% provider payment cuts for dates of service on and after January 1, 2022, pending federal approval.	

Disparities Reduction					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1007	Carrillo	Forced or Involuntary Sterilization Compensation Program.	Assembly Public Safety	Establishes the Forced or Involuntary Sterilization Compensation Program to provide compensation to survivors of state-sponsored sterilization conducted pursuant to eugenics laws that existed in California between 1909 and 1979 and to survivors of coercive sterilization performed in prisons after 1979. Requires the board to conduct outreach to locate qualified recipients, disclose a coerced sterilization, and review applications for victim compensation.	Support
AB 1094	Arambula	Sexual orientation and gender identity data collection pilot project.	Assembly Health	This bill would require the Department of Public Health to establish a 3-year pilot program in up to 6 counties, for coroners and medical examiners, following training, to begin data collection of gender identity and sexual orientation in cases of violent death and to aggregate, deidentify, and annually report the data to the board of supervisors and the department.	
AB 1204	Wicks	Hospital equity reporting.	Assembly Health	This bill would require a hospital or medical group to prepare and annually submit an equity report to OSHPD.	
SB 17	Pan	Office of Racial Equity.	Senate	Establishes the Office of Racial Equity, an independent public entity to coordinate, analyze, develop, evaluate, and recommend strategies for advancing racial equity across state agencies, departments, and the office of the Governor. Requires the office to develop a statewide Racial Equity Framework providing guidelines for inclusive policies and practices that reduce racial inequities, promote racial equity, address individual and structural racism.	
Behavioral Health					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 226	Ramos	Children's crisis psychiatric residential treatment facilities.	Assembly Human Services	This bill would reclassify children's crisis residential programs as children's crisis psychiatric residential treatment facilities and transfer licensing responsibility to DHCS, upon budget appropriations, to maximize federal funding.	
AB 586	O'Donnell	Pupil health: mental health services: funding.	Assembly	This bill would express legislative intent to develop a two-year grant program to assist local educational agencies in building infrastructure and partnerships to secure ongoing federal Medi-Cal funding for mental health services.	
AB 686	Arambula	California Community-Based Behavioral Health Outcomes and Accountability Review.	Assembly Health	This bill would establish the CA Community-Based Behavioral Health Outcomes and Accountability Review within agency to facilitate a local accountability system that fosters continuous quality improvement in county behavioral health programs.	Support
AB 1011	Waldron	Health care coverage: substance use disorders.	Assembly Health	The bill would prohibit health plan contracts and policies from imposing prior authorization or step therapy requirements on a prescription drug approved by the FDA for treating substance use disorders, unless specified criteria are met.	

AB 1051	Bennett	Medi-Cal: specialty mental health services: foster youth.	Assembly Human Services	The bill would prohibit the presumptive transfer of foster youth placed in a group home or a short-term residential therapeutic program (STRTP) unless an exception is invoked and make the county probation agency or the child welfare services agency responsible for determining whether invoking the exception is appropriate.	
AB 1178	Irwin	Medi-Cal: serious mental illness: drugs.	Assembly Health	This bill would delete the prior authorization requirement for any drug prescribed for the treatment of a serious mental illness for a period of 365 days after the initial prescription has been dispensed for a person over 18 years of age who is not under the transition jurisdiction of the juvenile court.	
SB 293	Limón	Medi-Cal specialty mental health services.	Senate Health	This bill would require DHCS with stakeholder consultation, to streamline and standardize forms for the intake of, assessment of, and the treatment planning of specialty mental health services for children on Medi-Cal.	Support
Conservatorship					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 574	Chen	Guardians ad litem: mental illnesses.	Assembly Health	Adds an additional procedure for the appointment of a guardian ad litem for a person who lacks the capacity to make "rational informed decisions" regarding medical care, mental health care, safety, hygiene, shelter, food, or clothing for adults without conservators.	
AB 1340	Santiago	Mental health services: involuntary detention.	Assembly	Expands the definition of gravely disabled in the LPS conservatorship process.	
SB 565	Jones	State Department of State Hospitals: facility expansion: report.	Senate	Requires the Department of State Hospitals report on the cost of adding LPS conservatorship beds.	
Cost Containment					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1130	Wood	California Health Care Quality and Affordability Act.	Assembly Health	Establishes the Office of Health Care Affordability within OSHPD to analyze the health care market for cost trends, develop data-informed policies for lowering health care costs, set and enforce cost targets, and create a state strategy for controlling the cost of health care for consumers and purchasers.	Support
AB 1132	Wood	Health Care Consolidation and Contracting Fairness Act of 2021.	Assembly Health	Places restrictions on certain anti-competitive contract provisions between a provider and a health plan. Gives the Attorney General review authority over for-profit hospital transactions. Gives DMHC review authority when health plans seek to merge with medical groups or other similar entities.	
Health Coverage					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 342	Gipson	Health care coverage: colorectal cancer: screening and testing.	Assembly Health	Requires more screening for colorectal cancer and prohibits a health plan contract or a health insurance policy from imposing cost sharing on individuals between 50 and 75 years of age for colonoscopies conducted for specified purposes.	

AB 347	Arambula	Health care coverage: step therapy.	Assembly Health	This bill would require health plans to grant a step therapy exception if specified criteria are met.	
AB 570	Santiago	Nongrandfathered health insurance policies.	Assembly	Current law provides for the regulation of health insurers by the Department of Insurance. Current law requires a nongrandfathered health insurance policy issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2015, to provide for a limit on the annual out-of-pocket expenses for covered essential health benefits. This bill would make technical, nonsubstantive changes to that provision.	
SB 245	Gonzalez	Health care coverage: abortion services: cost sharing.	Senate Health	Prohibits a health plan from imposing a deductible, coinsurance, copayment, or any other cost-sharing requirement on coverage for all abortion services.	
SB 250	Pan	Health care coverage.	Senate Health	Requires health plans to collect all cost-sharing from patients rather than providers.	
SB 644	Leyva	Health care coverage outreach.	Senate Health	Requires EDD to share information with Covered California for outreach to persons applying for or losing unemployment benefits to enroll them in Covered CA or Medi-Cal.	Co-Sponsor
Health Insurance Market					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 493	Wood	Health insurance.	Assembly Health	Deletes provisions tying various consumer protections to the Affordable Care Act so they stand alone in state law.	
AB 727	Choi	Income tax: health savings accounts.	Assembly Revenue & Taxation	Allows tax exemptions for Health Savings Accounts.	
SB 255	Portantino	Health insurance: employer associations: large group health insurance.	Senate Health	Allows for employer to group to form Association Health Plans under the ERISA rules rather than Knox Keene.	
SB 326	Pan	Health care coverage: federal health care reforms.	Senate Health	Allows many Affordable Care Act consumer protections to remain in state statute even if the corresponding federal provision is no longer in effect, such as guaranteed issuance, the ban on pre-existing condition exclusions, the individual mandate, rates based solely on age and region, and the requirement to provide all essential health benefits.	Support
SB 368	Limón	Health care coverage: deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses.	Senate Health	Requires health plans to track deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums for enrollees.	Support
SB 455	Leyva	California Health Benefit Exchange.	Senate	Extends Covered CA's emergency rulemaking authority.	
SB 568	Pan	Deductibles: chronic disease management.	Senate Health	Exempts drugs for chronic conditions from deductibles.	
SB 718	Bates	Health care coverage: small employer groups.	Senate	Association health plan spot bill.	

Medical Debt					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 510	Wood	Out-of-network health care benefits.	Assembly Health	Bill to conform CA's balance billing law with new federal "No Surprises" act.	
AB 532	Wood	Health care: fair billing policies.	Assembly Health	Requires notice of financial assistance when patients are discharged from the hospital and requires information about the Health Consumer Alliance.	Support
AB 1020	Friedman	Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.	Assembly	Enhances the enforcement of the Hospital Fair Pricing Act by imposing penalties for violations and adding requirements when filing a collections suit for hospital debt to show that the person has been screened for Medi-Cal or financial assistance.	Co-Sponsor
SB 531	Wieckowski	Consumer debt.	Senate Banking & Financial Institutions	Requires consumer notice 60 days before selling a debt.	
Other					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 326	Rivas, Luz	Health care service plans: Consumer Participation Program.	Assembly Health	This bill would permanently establish the Consumer Participation Program, which awards fees to individual or organization that has made a substantial contribution in representing consumers in regulation or decision adoption, within the Department of Managed Health Care. Co-sponsored CPeHN and Health Access.	Co-Sponsor
AB 1400	Kalra	Guaranteed Health Care for All.	Assembly	Creates California Guaranteed Health Care for All program, (CalCare) to provide comprehensive universal single-payer health care coverage and a health care cost control system for the benefit of all residents of the state.	
SB 40	Hurtado	Health care workforce development: California Medicine Scholars Program.	Senate Health	5-year pilot to create a medical school pipeline for Black & Latinx community college students in an effort to increase the number of primary care physicians of color.	Support
SB 65	Skinner	Developmental centers.	Senate	Momnibus spot bill - amended language will extend postpartum Medi-Cal coverage for 12 months, add doula coverage to Medi-Cal, add income support via CalWORKs and a monthly income stipend for pregnant and postpartum people, and improve the maternal and infant mortality and morbidity investigation processes.	Co-Sponsor
SB 379	Wiener	University of California: contracts: health facilities.	Senate Education	Prohibits UC providers from entering into contracts with entities that have policies prohibiting certain types of care (abortion, gender-affirming services) that providers are licensed to provide.	Support
SB 492	Hurtado	Pregnancy-related death: data.	Senate Health	Adds inclusion of physician negligence to the other data tracked by the California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act.	
SB 526	Min	Community water systems: lead user service lines.	Senate Environmental Quality	This bill would prohibit the practice of partially removing leaded pipes until 2025.	
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