

Health Care Legislation Affecting Low-Income Consumers as of April 8, 2021

Spring brings a flurry of hearings with the deadline to get bills with a fiscal cost to pass out of house of origin policy committee being April 30. However, the fate of some bill is already known with as some bills not moving forward this year, being made 2-year bills, due to the pandemic which has resulted in shortened hearing schedule. This is the first year of a two-year legislative cycle, so 2-year bills may move forward next year, and are still being determined as many bills have still not been scheduled. 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 112	Holden	Medi-Cal eligibility.	Assembly Appropriations	Requires suspension (rather than termination) of Medi-Cal eligibility for 3 years instead of 1 year while incarcerated.	Support
AB 368	Bonta	Food prescriptions.	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)	Support
AB 369	Kamlager	Medi-Cal services: persons experiencing homelessness.	Assembly Health	This bill would authorize Medi-Cal providers to bill Medi-Cal for Medi-Cal services that they render to people experiencing homelessness outside of traditional medical facilities, including street medicine teams, shelter-based care, or within transitional housing settings.	
AB 382	Kamlager	Whole Child Model program.	Assembly Appropriations	This bill would extend the Whole Child Model stakeholder advisory group from the end of 2021 to end of 2023.	Support
AB 470	Carrillo	Medi-Cal: eligibility.	Assembly Appropriations	Eliminates the consideration of assets for the purpose of determining Medi-Cal eligibility. Co-Sponsored with Justice in Aging.	Co-Sponsor
AB 540	Petrie-Norris	Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly.	Assembly Health	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.	Support
AB 563	Berman	School-based health programs.	Assembly Health	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 Appropriations	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: scope of practice.	Assembly Business & Professions	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 Appropriations	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.	Support
AB 875	Wood	Medi-Cal: covered benefits.	Assembly Health	CalAIM spot bill.	
AB 942	Wood	Specialty mental health	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.	2-year bill	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 Appropriations	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.	Assembly	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 Appropriations	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 Appropriations	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	Complex Needs Patient Act.	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.	Support
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.	Support
SB 17	Pan	Office of Racial Equity.	Senate Judiciary	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.	Support
SB 558	Caballero	Farmworker Disaster Relief Planning Task Force.	Senate Health	This bill would convene the Farmworker Disaster Relief Planning Taskforce with state and farmworker community advocacy representatives to examine the needs of farmworkers, their families and communities on equitable access to health care, safety net services, protections and other social and economic relief during pandemics and disasters.	Support
SB 682	Rubio	Childhood chronic health conditions: racial disparities.	Senate Health	This bill would require the Health and Human Services Agency to create a plan that intentionally and proactively responds to known racial disparities in children's chronic disease. Sponsor: Children Now	Support
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. Sponsor: California Alliance of Child and Family Services.	
AB 586	O'Donnell	Pupil health: health and mental health services: School Health Demonstration Project.	Assembly Education	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 935	Maienschein	Telehealth: mental health.	Assembly Health	This bill would require healthplans to provide primary care providers (PCPs), including obstetricians and pediatricians, with access to telehealth consults with mental health experts to enable them to more quickly treat moms and kids.	Support
AB 1011	Waldron	Health care coverage: substance use disorders.	Assembly Health	The bill would eliminate barriers to medication assisted treatment such as prior authorization, step therapy, and limits on the number of visits, days of coverage, scope or duration of treatment, or other similar limitations on coverage.	Support
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. Sponsor: CBHDA	
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 221	Wiener	Health care coverage: timely access to care.	Senate Appropriations	This bill would require health plans and insurers to provide patients with timely follow-up care for mental health issues and substance use disorders.	Support
SB 293	Limón	Medi-Cal specialty mental health services.	Senate Appropriations	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
SB 773	Roth	Medi-Cal managed care: behavioral health services.	Senate Health	This bill would require DHCS to make incentive payments from Jan 2022 to Dec 2024 to qualifying Medi-Cal managed care plans that meet predefined goals and metrics associated with targeted interventions to be determined in consultation with stakeholders.	
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.	Assembly Health	Expands the definition of gravely disabled in the LPS conservatorship process.	
SB 565	Jones	State Department of State Hospitals: facility expansion: report.	Senate Judiciary	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 Appropriations	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.	2-year bill	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 Appropriations	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 Appropriations	This bill would require health plans to grant a step therapy exception if specified criteria are met.	Support
AB 570	Santiago	Dependent parent health care coverage.	Assembly Health	This bill would enable persons to enroll their dependent parent(s) in their health insurance coverage.	Support
SB 245	Gonzalez	Health care coverage: abortion services: cost sharing.	Senate Appropriations	Prohibits a health plan from imposing a deductible, coinsurance, copayment, or any other cost-sharing requirement on coverage for all abortion services.	Support
SB 250	Pan	Health care coverage.	Senate Appropriations	Requires health plans to collect all cost-sharing from patients rather than providers.	
SB 306	Pan	Sexually transmitted disease: testing.	Senate Bus & Prof.	Aims to increase access to STD treatment by adding STD services to Family PACT, allowing prescriptions sexual partners when diagnosing an STD, and increasing access to home test kits, among other provisions.	Support
SB 644	Leyva	Health care coverage outreach.	Senate Labor	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 with Health Access & California Pan-Ethnic Health Network	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.	Support

AB 727	Choi	Income tax: health savings accounts.	Assembly Revenue & Taxation	Allows tax exemptions for Health Savings Accounts.	
SB 326	Pan	Health care coverage: federal health care reforms.	Senate Appropriations	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 Appropriations	Requires health plans to track deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums for enrollees.	Support
SB 455	Leyva	California Health Benefit Exchange.	Senate Appropriations	Extends Covered CA's emergency rulemaking authority.	
SB 568	Pan	Deductibles: chronic disease management.	Senate Health	Exempts drugs for chronic conditions from deductibles.	

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 Appropriations	Requires notice of financial assistance when patients are discharged from the hospital and requires information about the Health Consumer Alliance.	Support
AB 1020	Friedman	Health care debt and fair billing.	Assembly Health	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-sponsors Bet Tzedek and Public Law Center.	Co-Sponsor
SB 531	Wieckowski	Consumer debt.	Senate Judiciary	Requires consumer notice 60 days before assigning a debt and other collection protections.	

Telehealth

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 14	Aguiar-Curry	Communications: broadband services: California Advanced Services Fund.	Assembly Communications & Conveyance	This bill would prioritize the deployment of broadband infrastructure in California's underserved communities by extending the ongoing collection of funds deposited into the California Advanced Services Fund to provide communities with grants.	Support
AB 32	Aguiar-Curry	Telehealth.	Assembly Health	This bill would make permanent certain COVID19 telehealth flexibilities.	
AB 1176	Garcia, Eduardo	Communications: universal broadband service: California Connect Fund.	Assembly Communications & Conveyance	This bill would provide subsidies to low-income consumers and students for high-speed internet.	Support

SB 4	Gonzalez	Communications: California Advanced Services Fund.	Senate Energy, Utilities & Communications	This bill would prioritize the deployment of broadband infrastructure in California's underserved communities by extending the ongoing collection of funds deposited into the California Advanced Services Fund to provide communities with grants.	Support
Other					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 100	Holden	Drinking water: pipes and fittings: lead content.	Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials	The California Safe Drinking Water Act prohibits, with certain exceptions, the use of any pipe, pipe or plumbing fitting or fixture, solder, or flux that is not lead free in the installation or repair of any public water system or any plumbing in a facility providing water for human consumption. The act defines "lead free" for purposes of conveying or dispensing water for human consumption to mean not more than 0.2% lead when used with respect to solder and flux and not more than a weighted average of 0.25% lead when used with respect to the wetted surfaces of pipes and pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, and fixtures. This bill would additionally define "lead free," with respect to endpoint devices, as defined, to mean that the devices do not leach more than one microgram of lead under certain tests and meeting a specified certification.	Support
AB 326	Rivas, Luz	Health care service plans: Consumer Participation Program.	Assembly Appropriations	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 814	Levine	Personal information: contact tracing.	Assembly Privacy & Consumer Protection	This bill would prohibit law enforcement officials from engaging in contact tracing and limit contact tracing data to be used only for contact tracing purposes.	Support
AB 1046	Rubio, Blanca	Nurse-Family Partnership program.	Assembly Health	This bill would require Health and Human Services Agency convene a working group to assess and provide uniform recommendations on how to use Medi-Cal reimbursement for evidence-based home visiting.	Support
AB 1400	Kalra	Guaranteed Health Care for All.	2-year bill	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 Appropriations	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

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SB 65	Skinner	Maternal care and services.	Senate Health	California Omnibus Bill - Extends postpartum Medi-Cal coverage for 12 months, adds doula coverage to Medi-Cal, adds increased income support via CalWORKs and a monthly income stipend for pregnant and postpartum people, improves the maternal and infant mortality and morbidity investigation processes, and adds a program to fund midwife trainee placements. Co-Sponsors: Black Women for Wellness Action Project, California Nurse Midwives Association, March of Dimes, NARAL, NHeLP, Women's Policy Institute.	Co-Sponsor
SB 379	Wiener	University of California: contracts: health facilities.	Senate Health	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	Maternal health.	Senate Health	Adds a maternal mortality review board to the code.	
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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