

Health Care Legislation Affecting Low-Income Consumers as of September 15, 2023

Following is a summary of bills in the Legislature that affect the health of low-income Californians. Last day for fiscal committees to meet and report bills was September 1. September 14 was the final day of the legislative session. Bills that did not make it out of appropriations or the Legislature are denoted as "dead". Bills that have passed both houses have been sent to the Governor and are denoted as "enrolled". The Governor has until October 14 to sign or veto bills. Signed bills are denoted as "chaptered", meaning they will become law on January 1, 2024 unless otherwise noted.

Medi-Cal

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 365	Aguiar-Curry	Medi-Cal: diabetes management.	DEAD	This bill would codify continuous glucose monitoring and supplies as a Medi-Cal benefit and require the Department to review and update, as appropriate, the coverage policies for continuous glucose monitors.	Support
AB 425	Alvarez	Medi-Cal: pharmacogenomic testing.	ENROLLED	The bill would cover pharmacogenomic testing (laboratory genetic testing to identify how a person's genetics may impact the efficacy, toxicity, and safety of medications) under Medi-Cal if a medication is known to have an interaction.	
AB 576	Weber	Medi-Cal: reimbursement for abortion.	ENROLLED	This bill would require DHCS to review and update Medi-Cal coverage policies for medication abortion to align with current clinical guidelines and to allow flexibility for providers to exercise their clinical judgment when services are performed in a manner that aligns with clinical guidelines.	
AB 608	Schiavo	Medi-Cal: comprehensive perinatal services.	ENROLLED	This bill would extend the Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (CPSP) to cover the full year duration of postpartum eligibility from 60-days.	Support
AB 719	Boerner	Medi-Cal: nonmedical and nonemergency medical transportation.	ENROLLED	This bill would require Medi-Cal plans to contract with public transit operators for the purpose of establishing reimbursement rates for nonmedical and nonemergency medical transportation trips provided by a public transit operator.	
AB 1085	Maienschein	Medi-Cal: housing support services.	ENROLLED	The bill would require the Department to seek federal approval by July 2026 to make housing support services a Medi-Cal benefit. Housing support services help people access housing, remain stably housed, and are essential for individuals experiencing homelessness to access meaningful care.(Co-sponsored with Corporation for Supportive Housing)	Co-Sponsor
AB 1202	Lackey	Medi-Cal: health care services data: children and pregnant or postpartum persons.	ENROLLED	This bill would require DHCS to provide a report that includes an analysis of the adequacy of each Medi-Cal managed care plan's network for pediatric primary care, the number of children and pregnant or postpartum persons who are Medi-Cal enrollees receiving certain health services, and the department's efforts to improve access to pediatric preventive care.	Support

SB 311	Eggman	Medi-Cal: Part A buy-in.	ENROLLED	This bill would simplify the enrollment process for financial assistance for individuals who rely on Medicare and Medi-Cal but struggle to pay costly Medicare Part A premiums by requiring the department to enter into a Medicare Part A buy-in agreement with federal government, effective 2025 or later.	Support
SB 502	Allen	Medi-Cal: children: mobile optometric office.	ENROLLED	This bill would require DHCS to seek federal approval to exercise the Health Services Initiative option to cover vision services provided to low-income children through a mobile optometric office and authorizes Medi-Cal payment to mobile optometrists.	Support
SB 694	Eggman	Medi-Cal: self-measured blood pressure devices and services.	ENROLLED	This bill would make self-measured blood pressure (SMBP) devices and SMBP services covered Medi-Cal benefits for the treatment of high blood pressure.	Support
Disparities Reduction					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 85	Weber	Social determinants of health: screening and outreach.	ENROLLED	This bill would require a health care service plan contract or health insurance policy issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2027, to include coverage for screenings for social determinants of health, as defined. The bill would require a health care service plan or health insurer to provide primary care providers with adequate access to community health workers in counties where the health care service plan or health insurer has enrollees or insureds, as specified. The bill would also require DHCS to convene a working group to determine standardized methods of data documentation to be used in recording social determinants of health screening responses, create a standardized model and procedures for connecting patients with community resources, and to determine gaps in research and data to inform future policies. The bill would require the working group to submit a report to the Legislature with specified recommendations related to social determinants of health by July 1, 2026.	Support
AB 904	Calderon	Health care coverage: doulas.	ENROLLED	This bill would require health plans, on or before January 1, 2025, to develop a maternal and infant health equity program that addresses racial health disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes through the use of doulas and authorize the departments to convene workgroups to examine the implementation of these programs. Under the bill, a Medi-Cal managed care plan would satisfy that requirement by providing coverage of doula services so long as doula services are a Medi-Cal covered benefit. The bill would require the Department of Managed Health Care, in consultation with the Department of Insurance, to collect data and submit a report describing the doula coverage and the above-described programs to the Legislature by January 1, 2027.	Support
AB 1057	Weber	California Home Visiting Program.	ENROLLED	This bill establishes the California Home Visiting Program, which funds local health departments to support pregnant people and parents with young children who live in communities that face greater risks and barriers to achieving positive maternal and child health outcomes.	Support

AB 1701	Weber	Black infant health: California Perinatal Equity Initiative.	CHAPTERED	This bill would expand the California Perinatal Equity Initiative/Black Infant Health Program funding allocations to include city health departments.	Support
SB 435	Gonzalez	Collection of demographic data: CalFresh program and State Department of Public Health.	ENROLLED	This bill would require specified state agencies to use separate collection categories and tabulations for each major Latino, Latin American Indigenous, and Latin American Indigenous language groups.	Support
Health Coverage					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 4	Arambula	Covered California: expansion.	DEAD	Current state law creates the California Health Benefit Exchange, also known as Covered California, to facilitate the enrollment of qualified individuals and qualified small employers in qualified health plans as required under PPACA. Current law requires the Exchange to apply for a federal waiver to allow persons otherwise not able to obtain coverage through the Exchange because of their immigration status to obtain coverage from the Exchange. This bill would delete that requirement and would instead require the Exchange to administer a program to allow persons otherwise not able to obtain coverage by reason of immigration status to enroll in health insurance coverage in a manner as substantially similar to other Californians as feasible given existing federal law and rules.	Support
AB 632	Gipson	Health care coverage: prostate cancer screening.	ENROLLED	This bill would prohibit a health care service plan from applying a deductible, copayment, or coinsurance to coverage for prostate cancer screening services for an enrollee or insured who is 55 years of age or older or who is 40 years of age or older and is high risk, as determined by the attending or treating health care provider.	Support
AB 948	Berman	Prescription drugs.	ENROLLED	This bill would make permanent the existing \$250 co-pay cap for prescription drugs. This bill would delete drugs that are biologics from the definition of Tier 4. The bill would require a health care service plan or a health insurer, if there is a generic equivalent to a brand name drug, to ensure that an enrollee or insured is subject to the lowest cost-sharing that would be applied, whether or not both the generic equivalent and the brand name drug are on the formulary.	Support
AB 1157	Ortega	Rehabilitative and habilitative services: durable medical equipment and services.	DEAD	This bill would clarify that durable medical equipment is a covered essential health benefit in California-regulated health plans and policies when prescribed by a doctor for rehabilitative or habilitative purposes. The bill would also remove limitations such as annual caps on durable medical equipment coverage. (Co-sponsored with National Health Law Program)	Co-Sponsor

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AB 1645	Zbur	Health care coverage: cost sharing.	ENROLLED	The bill would prohibit large group contracts and policies issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2024, and an individual or small group health care service plan contract or health insurance policy issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2025, from imposing a cost-sharing requirement, utilization review, or other specified limits on a recommended sexually transmitted infections screening, and from imposing a cost-sharing requirement for any items and services integral to a sexually transmitted infections screening, as specified.	Support
SB 70	Wiener	Prescription drug coverage.	DEAD	This bill would prohibit limiting or excluding coverage of a prescription drug that is prescribed for off-label use. The bill would prohibit a health care service plan contract from requiring additional cost sharing not already imposed for a drug that was previously approved for coverage.	
SB 90	Wiener	Health care coverage: insulin affordability.	ENROLLED	Would prohibit a health care service plan contract or a disability insurance policy from imposing a deductible on an insulin prescription drug or imposing a copayment of more than \$35 for a 30-day supply of an insulin prescription drug, except as specified for a high deductible health plan.	Support
SB 257	Portantino	Health care coverage: diagnostic imaging.	ENROLLED	This bill would require a health care service plan contract, a policy of health insurance that provides hospital, medical, or surgical coverage, or a self-insured employee welfare benefit plan issued, amended, or renewed after January 1, 2025, to provide coverage without imposing cost-sharing for, among other things, screening mammography and medically necessary diagnostic breast imaging, including diagnostic breast imaging following an abnormal mammography result and for an enrollee or insured indicated to have a risk factor associated with breast cancer, except as specified.	Support
SB 339	Wiener	HIV preexposure prophylaxis and postexposure prophylaxis.	DEAD	This bill would require health plan coverage of the new long lasting injectable PrEP/PEP.	Support
SB 516	Skinner	Health care coverage: prior authorization.	2-year bill	This bill would prohibit a health plan or insurer from requiring a contracted provider to complete or obtain a prior authorization for any health care services if the plan or insurer approved or would have approved not less than 90% of the prior authorization requests they submitted in the most recent one-year contracted period. The bill would set standards for this exemption and its denial, rescission, and appeal.	
SB 595	Roth	Covered California: data sharing.	ENROLLED	This bill is follow-up legislation to ensure that last year's SB 644, which would require EDD to share information about those who applied for income-replacing benefits with Covered California to allow Covered California to outreach and help enroll these individuals in Medi-Cal or Covered California, is implemented timely.	Co-Sponsor

SB 598	Skinner	Health care coverage: prior authorization.	DEAD	This bill would prohibit a health care service plan or health insurer from requiring a contracted health professional to complete or obtain a prior authorization for any health care services if the plan or insurer approved or would have approved not less than 90% of the prior authorization requests they submitted in the most recent one-year contracted period. The bill would set standards for this exemption and its denial, rescission, and appeal.	Support
Behavioral Health					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 665	Carrillo, Wendy	Minors: consent to mental health services.	ENROLLED	This bill would remove the requirement that to consent to outpatient mental health treatment or counseling , or to residential shelter services, the minor must present a danger to themselves or to others, or be the alleged victim of incest or child abuse.	Support
AB 1060	Ortega	Health care coverage: naloxone hydrochloride.	ENROLLED	This bill would require that all health plans, including Medi-Cal, continue to cover naloxone even if the FDA moves it to over-the-counter and would limit cost sharing to \$10.	Support
AB 1437	Irwin	Medi-Cal: serious mental illness.	ENROLLED	This bill would require the Medi-Cal program to automatically approve a prescription refill for a drug for serious mental illness for 365 days after the initial prescription is dispensed for adults.	
SB 282	Eggman	Medi-Cal: federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics.	DEAD	This bill would allow individuals with Medi-Cal to access mental health and substance use disorder services on the same day they see a primary care doctor by allowing 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 through pilot project.	Support
SB 326	Eggman	The Behavioral Health Services Act.	ENROLLED	This bill would make changes to the Mental Health Services Act, in alignment with the Governor's proposal.	
Other					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 249	Holden	Water: schoolsites: lead testing.	ENROLLED	This bill would require community water systems serving school sites to test for lead in all school potable water fountains by 2027 and to report the results to the State Water Board and applicable school.	Support

AB 616	Rodriguez	Medical Group Financial Transparency Act.	ENROLLED	This bill would authorize the disclosure of audited financial reports and comprehensive financial statements of providers and physician organizations collected by the Office of Health Care Affordability and financial and other records of risk-bearing organizations made available to the Department of Managed Health Care. Notwithstanding any other law, financial and other records of risk-bearing organizations to be produced, disclosed, or otherwise made available to the department pursuant to this section shall be open to public disclosure using a process equivalent to the process for disclosing health care service plan financial and administrative information described in Sections 1341.5 and 1384. This shall not be construed to require the public disclosure of individual plan-specific rates.	Support
AB 716	Boerner	Ground medical transportation.	ENROLLED	This bill would prevent consumers from being charged an out-of-network surprise bill for ground ambulance services.	Support
AB 952	Wood	Dental coverage disclosures.	CHAPTERED	Would require a health care service plan or health insurer that issues, sells, renews, or offers a contract covering dental services, including a specialized health care service plan or specialized health insurer covering dental services, to disclose whether an enrollee's or insured's dental coverage is "State Regulated" through a provider portal, if available, or otherwise upon request, on or after January 1, 2025.	
AB 1048	Wicks	Dental benefits and rate review.	ENROLLED	This bill would, on and after January 1, 2025, prohibit dental plans from implementing waiting periods and denying claims related to preexisting conditions. The bill would also require review of dental plan premium rates.	Support
AB 1092	Wood	Health care service plans: consolidation.	DEAD	This bill would require a health care service plan that intends to acquire or obtain control of an entity, as specified, to give notice to, and secure prior approval from the director.	Support
AB 1331	Wood	California Health and Human Services Data Exchange Framework.	DEAD	This bill would require the Center for Data Insights and Innovation to take over establishment, implementation, and all the functions related to the California Health and Human Services Data Exchange Framework on or before July 1, 2023, subject to an appropriation in the annual Budget Act.	Support
AB 1414	Kalra	Civil actions: consumer debt.	ENROLLED	This bill would protect consumers against predatory debt collection lawsuits by requiring debt collectors to produce and sue on a contract rather than "common counts."	Support
SB 43	Eggman	Behavioral health.	ENROLLED	This bill would expand the definition of "gravely disabled" and would allow a hearsay exception in conservatorship proceedings for the admission of practitioner statements from medical records.	Oppose
SB 238	Wiener	Health care coverage: independent medical review.	DEAD	This bill would automatically refer a disputed mental health care service for children and youth under age 22 to Independent Medical Review process.	Support
SB 525	Durazo	Minimum wages: health care workers.	ENROLLED	This bill would require a healthcare worker minimum wage of \$21 per hour and eventually \$25 an hour for hours worked in covered healthcare employment, as defined.	Support

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SB 635	Menjivar	Health care coverage: hearing aids.	ENROLLED	This bill, the Let California Kids Hear Act, would require a health care service plan contract or health insurance policy issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2025, to include coverage for hearing aids for enrollees and insureds under 21 years of age, if medically necessary. The bill would limit the maximum required coverage amount to \$3,000 per individual hearing aid, as specified.	Support
SB 770	Wiener	Health care: unified health care financing.	ENROLLED	This bill would require the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency to research, develop and pursue discussions of a waiver framework in consultation with the federal government with the objective of creating a unified healthcare financing system.	Support
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