

Health Care Legislation Affecting Low-Income Consumers as of October 11, 2023

Following is a summary of bills in the Legislature that affect the health of low-income Californians. September 14 was the final day of the legislative session. 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 "chapters", meaning they will become law on January 1, 2024 unless otherwise noted.

Medi-Cal

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 425	Alvarez	Medi-Cal: pharmacogenomic testing.	CHAPTERED	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.	VETOED - AB 576 veto message	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.	VETOED - AB 608 veto message	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.	VETOED - AB 719 veto message	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.	VETOED - AB 1085 veto message	The bill would require the Department to seek federal approval to make housing support services a Medi-Cal benefit by July 2026. 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.	VETOED - AB 1202 veto message	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.	CHAPTERED	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.	CHAPTERED	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.	VETOED - SB 694 veto message	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.	VETOED - AB 85 veto message	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.	CHAPTERED	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.	VETOED - AB 1057 veto message	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	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.	VETOED - SB 435 veto message	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 632	Gipson	Health care coverage: prostate cancer screening.	VETOED - AB 632 veto message	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 1645	Zbur	Health care coverage: cost sharing.	VETOED - AB 1645 veto message	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 90	Wiener	Health care coverage: insulin affordability.	VETOED - SB 90 veto message	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.	VETOED - SB 257 veto message	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 595	Roth	Covered California: data sharing.	CHAPTERED	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
Behavioral Health					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 665	Carrillo, Wendy	Minors: consent to mental health services.	CHAPTERED	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.	VETOED - AB 1060 veto message	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.	VETOED - AB 1437 veto message	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 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.	VETOED - AB 249 veto message	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.	CHAPTERED	This bill would prevent consumers from being charged an out-of-network surprise bill for ground ambulance services.	Support
AB 1048	Wicks	Dental benefits and rate review.	CHAPTERED	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

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AB 1414	Kalra	Civil actions: consumer debt.	CHAPTERED	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.	CHAPTERED	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 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
SB 635	Menjivar	Health care coverage: hearing aids.	VETOED - SB 635 veto message	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.	CHAPTERED	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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