

Health Care Legislation Affecting Low-Income Consumers as of March 14, 2024

The deadline for bills to be introduced was February 16. The first Assembly Health Committee bill hearing will be March 19 and the first Senate Health Committee bill hearing will be March 20. As the deadline for bills with fiscal cost to pass out of policy committee for house of origin looms on April 26, 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.

Black Birthing Justice

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 2160	McKinnor	California Women's Care Act.	Assembly Public Safety	This bill would, when a court is exercising its discretion, make a rebuttable presumption against detention and incarceration of a pregnant or postpartum defendant if the defendant provides the court and district attorney with notice of the defendant's status as a pregnant or postpartum defendant.	
AB 2319	Wilson and Weber	California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act.	Assembly Health	This bill would make a legislative finding that the Legislature recognizes all birthing people, including nonbinary persons and persons of transgender experience. The bill would extend the evidence-based implicit bias training requirements to also include hospitals that provide perinatal or prenatal care, as defined. The bill would require initial basic training for the implicit bias program to be completed by June 1, 2025, for current healthcare providers, and within 6 months of their start date for new healthcare providers, unless exempted. The bill would authorize the department to issue an administrative penalty if it determines that a facility has violated these provisions, and would require the department to annually post on its Internet website a list of facilities that did not submit timely proof of compliance and have been issued administrative penalties.	Co-Sponsor
AB 2527	Bauer-Kahan	Incarceration: pregnant persons.	Assembly Public Safety	This bill would require incarcerated pregnant persons to be provided with free and clean bottled water and daily high-quality and high caloric nutritional meals, as specified. The bill would also prohibit incarcerated pregnant persons from being placed in solitary confinement or restrictive housing units during their pregnancy or for 12 weeks postpartum.	

Medi-Cal

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1943	Weber	Health information.	Assembly Health	This bill would require DHCS to identify indicators for tracking telehealth outcomes associated with impacting individual patient outcomes and overall population health and collect that data.	

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AB 2110	Arambula	Medi-Cal: Adverse Childhood Experiences trauma screenings: providers.	Assembly Health	This bill would add CBOs, community health workers through local health departments, and doulas as qualified providers, who can receive Medi-Cal reimbursements for providing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) trauma screenings.	Support
AB 2339	Aguiar-Curry	Medi-Cal: telehealth.	Assembly Health	This bill would expand definition of “asynchronous store and forward” for to include asynchronous electronic transmission initiated directly by patients, including through mobile telephone applications.	
AB 2340	Bonta	Medi-Cal: EPSDT services.	Assembly Health	This bill would define coverage requirements under the Medi-Cal Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit.	
AB 2356	Wallis	Medi-Cal: monthly maintenance amount: personal and incidental needs.	Assembly Health	This bill would increase the monthly maintenance amount for personal and incidental needs for medically needy persons and medically needy family persons from \$35 to \$50, and would require that the amount be increased annually, as specified.	Support
AB 2376	Bains	Medi-Cal.	Assembly	Would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to allow for acute care hospitals that accept Medi-Cal coverage to directly bill for inpatient detox services and Medically Assisted Treatment for substance abuse issues, as specified.	
AB 2446	Ortega	Medi-Cal: diapers.	Assembly Health	Would make diapers for infants or toddlers over 3 years old with certain conditions that contribute to incontinence, such as a urinary tract infection and colic, among others a covered benefit under Medi-Cal.	
AB 2956	Boerner	Medi-Cal eligibility: redetermination.	Assembly Health	This bill would allow people to keep their Medi-Cal coverage for a full 12 months, regardless of changes in their income and would direct California to seek federal approval, when necessary, to make permanent the federal Medi-Cal flexibilities to reduce and remedy procedural terminations, simplify income verification requirements, increase automatic Medi-Cal renewals, and improve program outreach and customer service.	Co-Sponsor
AB 3156	Patterson, Joe	Medi-Cal: managed care plans.	Assembly	This bill would exempt Medi-Cal members who receive services from a regional center and use a Medi-Cal fee-for-service delivery system as a secondary form of health coverage from mandatory managed care enrollment.	
AB 3215	Soria	Medi-Cal: mental health services for children.	Assembly	Would express the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to expand access to behavioral mental health services to children receiving Medi-Cal benefits.	
SB 953	Menjivar	Medi-Cal: menstrual products.	Senate Health	This bill would add menstrual products to the schedule of covered Medi-Cal benefits.	Support
SB 1112	Menjivar	Medi-Cal: families with subsidized childcare.	Senate Health	This bill would require DHCS and CDSS to enter into a memorandum of understanding to facilitate coordination between Medi-Cal managed care plans and alternative payment agencies that operate alternative payment programs under the Child Care and Development Services Act.	
SB 1257	Blakespear	Geographic Managed Care Pilot Project: County of San Diego: CalAIM.	Senate Health	This bill would combine San Diego's Medi-Cal consumer advisory board and health professional advisory board into one board and no longer require (but rather allow) compensation to Medi-Cal members to offset costs of participating in advisory board.	

SB 1289	Roth	Medi-Cal: schedule of benefits.	Senate	This spot bill would remedy the barriers at county call centers by directing the promulgation of regulations that set basic standards for things like wait times and requiring DHCS to publish online call center data from all 58 counties.	Co-Sponsor
SB 1355	Wahab	Medi-Cal: in-home supportive services: redetermination.	Senate Health	This bill would require an IHSS recipient to be continuously eligible for Medi-Cal for 3 years, and would prohibit a redetermination of Medi-Cal eligibility before 3 years.	
SB 1423	Dahle	Medi-Cal: critical access hospitals.	Senate Health	This bill would require the reimbursement to a critical access hospital for Medi-Cal covered outpatient services at a rate equal to the actual cost to the hospital and require reimbursement to those hospitals, under the same terms, for swing-bed services, which are beds licensed for general acute care that may be used as skilled nursing beds.	
SB 1492	Menjivar	Medi-Cal reimbursement rates: private duty nursing.	Senate Health	This bill would clarify that private duty nursing services provided to a child under 21 years are considered specialty care services, for purposes of using proceeds from MCO tax.	

Dental

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 2028	Ortega	Medical loss ratios.	Assembly Health	This bill would require a dental health plan contract to comply with a minimum MLR of 85% and to provide rebate to enrollee if minimum is not met.	
AB 2701	Villapudua	Medi-Cal: dental cleanings and examinations.	Assembly Health	This bill will expand California's Medi-Cal Dental benefits to include a second cleaning and exam for adults aged 21+.	Support
SB 980	Wahab	Medi-Cal: dental crowns and implants.	Senate Health	This bill would provide Medi-Cal coverage for persons 13 years of age or older (instead of current age 21+) for laboratory-processed crowns on teeth when a lesser service would not suffice and medically necessary and add dental implant if tooth extraction or removal is medically necessary as a Medi-Cal benefit.	Support

Disparities Reduction

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1970	Jackson	Mental Health: Black Mental Health Navigator Certification Pilot Program.	Assembly Health	Would establish the Black Mental Health Navigator Certification Pilot Program, to be administered by the State Department of Health Care Services, to provide comprehensive training in mental health resources and awareness.	
AB 2250	Weber	Social determinants of health: screening and outreach.	Assembly Health	After January 1, 2027, this bill would require a health care service plan contract or health insurance policy to include coverage for screenings for social determinants of health. The bill would require providers to use specified tools or protocols when documenting patient responses to questions asked in these screenings. The bill would require a health care service plan or health insurer to provide physicians who provide primary care services with adequate access to peer support specialists, lay health workers, social workers, or community health workers in counties where the plan or insurer has enrollees or insureds.	Support

AB 2442	Zbur	Healing arts: expedited licensure process: gender-affirming health care and gender-affirming mental health care.	Assembly Business & Professions	This bill would require the CA Medical Board, CA Osteopathic Medical Board, Board of Registered Nursing, and Physician Assistant Board to expedite the licensure process for an applicant who demonstrates that they intend to provide gender-affirming health care and gender-affirming mental health care.	
SB 957	Wiener	Data collection: sexual orientation and gender identity.	Senate Health	This bill would require the Department of Public Health to collect demographic data from third parties, including local health departments; allow voluntarily provided sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data to be included in the statewide immunization registry; require the Department prepare an annual report concerning SOGI data.	Support
SB 1008	Bradford	Obesity Treatment Parity Act.	Senate Health	This bill would require health plan coverage for the treatment of obesity in the same manner as any other illness, condition, or disorder and require that at least one FDA-approved anti-obesity medication be covered under tier one of the plan's drug formulary.	
SB 1016	Gonzalez	Latino and Indigenous Disparities Reduction Act.	Senate Human Services	This bill would require the Department of Social Services and the Department of Public Health to collect and disaggregate data for Latine and Indigenous Mesoamerican populations.	Support
SB 1213	Atkins	Health care programs: cancer.	Senate Health	This bill raises the income limit for the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program, which provides breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment, from 200% to 300% of FPL.	Support

Due Process

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 3260	Pellerin	Health care coverage: reviews and grievances.	Assembly Health	Current law generally authorizes a health care service plan or disability insurer to use utilization review, under which a licensed physician or a licensed health care professional who is competent to evaluate specific clinical issues may approve, modify, delay, or deny requests for health care services based on medical necessity. Current law requires these decisions to be made within 30 days, or less than 72 hours when the enrollee faces an imminent and serious threat to their health. Current law requires a health care service plan to establish a grievance system to resolve grievances within 30 days, but limits that timeframe to 3 days when the enrollee faces an imminent and serious threat to their health. Existing law requires a plan to provide a written explanation for its grievance decisions, as specified. This bill would require that utilization review decisions be made within 72 hours when the enrollee's condition is urgent, and would make a determination of urgency by a referring or treating health care provider binding on the health care service plan. If a health care service plan fails to make a utilization review decision within the applicable 72-hour or 30-day timeline, the bill would automatically entitle an enrollee to proceed with a grievance.	

SB 294	Wiener	Health care coverage: independent medical review.	Assembly	This bill would ensure health plan denials for mental health disorders for youth are automatically reviewed through the grievance process for non-urgent cases or through the IMR process for urgent cases.	Support
Health Coverage					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1783	Essayli	Health care: immigration.	Assembly	Would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to remove all taxpayer funding for health care for illegal immigrants from the California State Budget.	
AB 2180	Weber	Health care coverage: cost sharing.	Assembly Health	Would require a health care service plan, health insurance policy, or pharmacy benefit manager that administers pharmacy benefits for a health care service plan or health insurer to apply any amounts paid by the enrollee, insured, or another source pursuant to a discount, repayment, product voucher, or other reduction to the enrollee's or insured's out-of-pocket expenses toward the enrollee's or insured's overall contribution to any out-of-pocket maximum, deductible, copayment, coinsurance, or applicable cost-sharing requirement under the enrollee's or insured's health care service plan contract or health insurance policy.	
AB 2200	Kalra	Guaranteed Health Care for All.	Assembly	This bill would create 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.	Support
AB 2258	Zbur	Health care coverage: cost sharing.	Assembly Health	This bill would eliminate cost-sharing on all integral services related to preventive health services, such as PrEP/PEP, contraception access, and other essential health benefits.	
AB 2271	Ortega	Coverage for naloxone hydrochloride.	Assembly Health	The bill would require health coverage of naloxone hydrochloride or another FDA-approved drug for the complete or partial reversal of an opioid overdose (contingent on funding from the Naloxone Distribution Project for Medi-Cal), prohibit cost sharing to exceed \$10, and prohibit a high deductible health plan from imposing cost sharing.	
AB 2449	Ta	Health care coverage: qualified autism service providers.	Assembly Health	Current law requires a health care service plan contract or health insurance policy to provide coverage for behavioral health treatment provided for pervasive developmental disorder or autism and requires a plan or policy to maintain an adequate network of qualified autism service providers. Under current law, a "qualified autism service provider" means, among other things, a person who is certified by a national entity, such as the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, with a certification that is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. This bill would clarify that the Qualified Applied Behavior Analysis Credentialing Board is also a national entity that may certify a qualified autism service provider, and would authorize the certification to be accredited by the American National Standards Institute.	

AB 2753	Ortega	Rehabilitative and habilitative services: durable medical equipment and services.	Assembly Health	This bill would clarify that Durable Medical Equipment (DME) is a covered Essential Health Benefit in California health plans and policies when prescribed by a provider for rehabilitative or habilitative purposes and would remove limitations such as annual caps on DME coverage. This bill would be cost-neutral to the State because it seeks to address the lack of compliance with federal nondiscrimination law.	Co-Sponsor
AB 2843	Petrie-Norris	Health care coverage: rape and sexual assault.	Assembly Health	This bill would require a health care service plan or health insurance policy that is issued, amended, renewed, or delivered on or after January 1, 2025, to provide coverage without cost sharing for emergency room medical care and follow-up health care treatment for an enrollee or insured who is treated following a rape or sexual assault. The bill would prohibit a health care service plan or health insurer from requiring, as a condition of providing coverage, (1) an enrollee or insured to file a police report, (2) charges to be brought against an assailant, (3) or an assailant to be convicted of rape or sexual assault.	
AB 3245	Patterson, Joe	Coverage for colorectal cancer screening.	Assembly Health	Current law generally requires a health care service plan contract or a health insurance policy issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2022, to provide coverage without cost sharing for a colorectal cancer screening test, and for a colorectal cancer screening examination in specified circumstances, assigned either a grade of A or a grade of B by the United States Preventive Services Task Force. This bill would additionally require that coverage if the test or screening examination is assigned either a grade of A or a grade of B by another accredited or certified guideline agency.	
SB 999	Cortese	Health coverage: mental health and substance use disorders.	Senate Health	Would require a health care service plan and a disability insurer, and an entity acting on a plan's or insurer's behalf, to ensure compliance with specific requirements for utilization review, including maintaining telephone access and other direct communication access during California business hours for a health care provider to request authorization for mental health and substance use disorder care and conducting peer-to-peer discussions regarding specific patient issues related to treatment. Because a willful violation of these provisions by a health care service plan would be a crime, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.	
SB 1120	Becker	Health care coverage: utilization review.	Senate Health	This bill would require a health care service plan or health insurer to ensure that a licensed physician supervises the use of artificial intelligence decision-making tools when those tools are used to inform decisions to approve, modify, or deny requests by providers for authorization prior to, or concurrent with, the provision of health care services to enrollees or insureds.	
SB 1290	Roth	Health care coverage: essential health benefits.	Senate Health	Would express the intent of the Legislature to review California's essential health benefits benchmark plan and establish a new benchmark plan for the 2027 plan year. The bill would limit the applicability of the current benchmark plan benefits to plan years on or before the 2027 plan year. This bill contains other related provisions and other existing laws.	

SB 1384	Dodd	Powered wheelchairs: repair.	Senate Business, Professions & Economic Development	Would, except as specified, require an original equipment manufacturer of a powered wheelchair, as those terms are defined, to provide documentation, parts, embedded software, firmware, and tools used to inspect, diagnose, maintain, and repair the wheelchair to an owner or an independent repair provider for the purposes of providing service on the equipment in the state, on fair and reasonable terms and costs, as defined. The bill would also require an original equipment manufacturer, for a powered wheelchair that contains an electronic security lock or other security-related function, to provide any documentation, parts, embedded software, firmware, or tools needed to reset the lock or function when disabled in the course of providing services, as specified. The bill would require an independent repair provider to provide a written notice to a customer before providing repair services, as specified.	
Maternity Care					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1895	Weber	Public health: maternity ward closures.	Assembly	Would express the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to address maternity ward closures.	
SB 1300	Cortese	Health facility closure: public notice: inpatient psychiatric and maternity services.	Senate Health	This bill would require a health facility to provide 120-day public notice of the elimination of its inpatient psychiatric or maternity ward unit. As part of its public notice, a health facility would be required to conduct, complete, and submit a California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) certified report indicating the impact to the health of the surrounding community. The HCAI report will allow the County Board of Supervisors and the Public to determine the magnitude of the reduction of beds and services and whether to expedite the licensing of new services to account for the loss.	
Medical Debt					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1860	Bauer-Kahan	Personal Income Tax Law: exclusions: student loan debt.	Assembly Appropriations	This bill would clarify state law to ensure that forgiven student and medical debt by a qualifying 501(c)(3) is not considered taxable income.	
AB 2297	Friedman	Hospital and Emergency Physician Fair Pricing Policies.	Assembly Health	This bill would modernize the Hospital Fair Pricing Act by prohibiting the use of home liens to collect unpaid medical bills from financially eligible patients, clarifying hospitals must review financial assistance eligibility at any time, and other important protections.	Co-Sponsor
SB 1061	Limón	Consumer debt: medical debt.	Senate Judiciary	This bill would prohibit consumer credit report to contain information about medical debt.	

Prescription Drugs					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1902	Alanis	Prescription drug labels: accessibility.	Assembly Business & Professions	This bill would require pharmacies to notify patients that accessible prescription labels are available at request for no additional cost and to provide no-cost accessible prescription labels for patients upon request.	Support
AB 2169	Bauer-Kahan	Prescription drug coverage: dose adjustments.	Assembly Health	Current law prohibits a health care service plan that covers prescription drug benefits from limiting or excluding coverage for a drug that was previously approved for coverage if an enrollee continues to be prescribed that drug, as specified. The bill would authorize a licensed health care professional to request, and would require that they be granted, the authority to adjust the dose or frequency of a drug to meet the specific medical needs of the enrollee or insured without prior authorization if specified conditions are met. Under the bill, if the enrollee or insured has been continuously using a prescription drug selected by their prescribing provider for the medical condition under consideration while covered by their current or previous health coverage, the health care service plan or health insurance policy would be prohibited from limiting or excluding coverage of that prescription. With respect to health care service plans, the bill would specify that its provisions do not apply to Medi-Cal managed care plan contracts. Because a willful violation of these provisions by a health care service plan would be a crime, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.	
Reparations					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1970	Jackson	Mental Health: Black Mental Health Navigator Certification Pilot Program.	Assembly Health	Would establish the Black Mental Health Navigator Certification Pilot Program, to be administered by the State Department of Health Care Services, to provide comprehensive training in mental health resources and awareness.	
AB 1975	Bonta	Medi-Cal: medically supportive food and nutrition interventions.	Assembly Health	Make medically supportive food and nutrition interventions, when deemed medically necessary by healthcare providers, a permanent part of Medi-Cal benefits in California.	Support
Other					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 236	Holden	Health care coverage: provider directories.	Senate	This bill would require health plans audit their own provider directories and would establish annual, increasing provider directory accuracy benchmarks for health plans.	Support
AB 1810	Bryan	Incarcerated persons: menstrual products.	Assembly Appropriations	This bill would make menstrual products more accessible to incarcerated individuals through ready access, rather than requiring request, of menstrual products.	Support

AB 1851	Holden	Drinking water: schoolsites: lead testing pilot program.	Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials	This bill would establish pilot for schools to sample water system outlets for lead contamination, identify and remediate any potable water system outlet emitting water containing excess lead levels, and notify parents/guardians if excess lead is found.	Support
AB 2085	Bauer-Kahan	Planning and zoning: ministerial approval: community clinic.	Assembly Local Government	Would authorize a development proponent to submit to a local agency an application for a licensed community clinic that is located in a zone where office, retail, health care, or parking are a principally permitted use. The bill would make the development subject to a streamlined, ministerial approval process where the development is not subject to a conditional use permit or any other nonlegislative discretionary approval, as described. The bill would provide that a development eligible for approval pursuant to this process is not a “project” for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), thereby expanding the exemption for ministerial approval of projects under CEQA. By establishing the streamlined, ministerial approval process for these developments, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.	
AB 2300	Wilson	Medical devices: Di-(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP).	Assembly Health	This bill would phase out the manufacturing, sale, and distribution of IV solution bags and tubing made with intentionally added Di-(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP). The bill would also prohibit a person or entity from replacing DEHP for revised or new products with other specified ortho-phthalates.	Support
AB 2435	Maienschein	California Health Benefit Exchange.	Assembly Health	This bill would extend Covered California’s authority to implement emergency rulemaking packages until January 1, 2030 (from 2025).	
AB 2671	Weber	Family daycare homes: filtered water.	Assembly Human Services	This bill would require a licensed family daycare home to only serve filtered water to children and would authorize funds from a grant program to be used to provide lead-removing water filters to family daycare homes.	
AB 2767	Santiago	Financial Solvency Standards Board: membership.	Assembly Health	This bill would require the Department of Managed Health Care to appoint 3 additional members to Financial Solvency Standards Board, including consumer advocates, labor, and individuals with training and experience in large group health insurance purchasing.	
SB 1193	Menjivar	Airports: leaded aviation gasoline.	Senate Transportation	This bill would phase out the ban of leaded aviation fuel.	Co-Sponsor
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