

Health Care Legislation Affecting Low-Income Consumers as of April 10, 2024

Bills that were introduced earlier this year and late last year are now being heard by their policy committees of jurisdiction. All bills with a cost must be heard by April 26 in their policy committee and after that will go the respective Appropriations Committees, which must wrap by May 17. The next two months will see a flurry of activity and Western Center will keep you posted on the latest developments. 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	California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act.	Assembly Appropriations	As amended on March 21, 2024, this bill clarifies which facilities are mandated to administer anti-bias training and which employees need to be trained. Also confers enforcement powers to CDPH and the Attorney General and establishes administrative penalties for noncompliant facilities. The bill adds inclusive language to account for nonbinary people and men of transgender experience who also carry children and give birth.	Co-Sponsor
AB 2527	Bauer-Kahan	Incarceration: pregnant persons.	Assembly Appropriations	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. 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.	Support

Medi-Cal

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1943	Weber	Medi-Cal: telehealth.	Assembly Privacy & Consumer Protection	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.	
AB 2110	Arambula	Medi-Cal: Adverse Childhood Experiences trauma screenings: providers.	Assembly Appropriations	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 Appropriations	This bill would expand access to telehealth services by allowing the use of asynchronous telehealth to establish a new patient relationship when related to sensitive services or when requested by the patient.	
AB 2340	Bonta	Medi-Cal: EPSDT services: informational materials.	Assembly Health	This bill would codify requirements to inform children and families about the comprehensive coverage available through the Medi-Cal Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit.	Support
AB 2356	Wallis	Medi-Cal: monthly maintenance amount: personal and incidental needs.	Assembly Appropriations	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.	
AB 2446	Ortega	Medi-Cal: diapers.	Assembly Appropriations	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.	Support
AB 2466	Carrillo, Wendy	Medi-Cal managed care: network adequacy standards.	Assembly Health	This bill would provide greater accountability for Medi-Cal plans and county behavioral health plans not meeting timely appointment access standards, especially for children and youth seeking covered behavioral health services.	Support
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: exemption from mandatory enrollment.	Assembly Health	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.	
SB 953	Menjivar	Medi-Cal: menstrual products.	Senate Appropriations	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 Human Services	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: county call centers: data.	Senate Health	This 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 Appropriations	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 Appropriations	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.	Assembly Appropriations	As amended on April 1, 2024, this bill would require DHCS to develop criteria for a specialty certificate program and specialized training requirements for a Black Mental Health Navigator Certification.	
AB 2250	Weber	Social determinants of health: screening and outreach.	Assembly Appropriations	This bill would require a health care service plan contract or health insurance policy to include coverage for screenings for social determinants of health. Providers would use specified tools or protocols when documenting patient responses to questions asked in these screenings. The bill would require health plans to provide physicians, under specified circumstances, with access to peer support specialists, lay health workers, social workers, or community health workers.	Support
AB 2442	Zbur	Healing arts: expedited licensure process: gender-affirming health care and gender-affirming mental health care.	Assembly Appropriations	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.	
AB 3161	Bonta	Health and care facilities: patient safety and antidiscrimination.	Assembly Judiciary	The Equity in Health Care Act begins to address racial and implicit bias in health care, more specifically in hospitals and long-term care facilities, and provides pathways for justice for community members who experience trauma from racial discrimination in their health care.	Support

SB 957	Wiener	Data collection: sexual orientation and gender identity.	Senate Appropriations	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.	Support
SB 1016	Gonzalez	Latino and Indigenous Disparities Reduction Act.	Senate Health	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 Appropriations	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 requires decisions to approve, modify, delay, or deny requests for health care services based on medical necessity to be made within 30 days, or less than 72 hours when the enrollee faces an imminent and serious threat to their health. This bill would require that utilization review decisions be made within 72 hours when the enrollee's condition is urgent and a determination of urgency by a referring or treating health care provider would be 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	This bill would allow copay assistance given by any third party to benefit patients, not insurers. Would ban copay accumulator policies that prevent copay cost-sharing assistance from counting towards the patient's deductible and maximum out-of-pocket cost-sharing obligation.	Support

AB 2200	Kalra	Guaranteed Health Care for All.	Assembly Health	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 Appropriations	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.	Support
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	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 2726	Flora	Specialty care network: telehealth and other virtual services.	Assembly Health	This bill would require the California Health and Human Services Agency, in collaboration with the Department of Health Care Access and Information and the State Department of Health Care Services, to establish a demonstration project for a telehealth and other virtual services specialty care network that is designed to serve patients of safety-net providers. The bill would authorize the focus of the project to include increasing access to behavioral and maternal health services and additional specialties prioritized by the agency.	
AB 2753	Ortega	Rehabilitative and habilitative services: durable medical equipment and services.	Assembly Appropriations	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 eliminate cost sharing for emergency room medical care and follow-up health care treatment for an enrollee or insured seeking care 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.	Support
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 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 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 healthcare service plan or disability insurer to maintain telephone access and other direct communication access during California business hours for a healthcare provider to request authorization for mental health and substance use disorder care and conduct peer-to-peer discussions regarding specific patient issues related to treatment.	
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	This bill would require a review of 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.	
SB 1384	Dodd	Powered wheelchairs: repair.	Senate Appropriations	This bill would require an original equipment manufacturer of a powered wheelchair 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 to provide service on the equipment or specified parts in the state, on fair and reasonable terms and costs.	

Maternity Care

Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1895	Weber	Public health: maternity ward closures.	Assembly Health	This bill would require an acute care hospital that offers maternity services, when those services are at risk of closure, in the next 12 months to provide specified information to the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) as well as the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), including the number of medical staff and employees working in the maternity ward and the hospital's prior and projected performance on financial metrics. The bill would also require HCAI, in conjunction with CDPH, to conduct a community impact assessment and the hospital to provide public notice of the potential closure.	
SB 1300	Cortese	Health facility closure: public notice: inpatient psychiatric and maternity services.	Senate Appropriations	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 submit a California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) certified report indicating the impact on 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.	Support

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 Judiciary	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	This bill would prohibit consumer credit report to contain information about medical debt.	Support
Prescription Drugs					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1902	Alanis	Prescription drug labels: accessibility.	Assembly Appropriations	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 Appropriations	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.	
Reparations					
Measure	Author	Topic	Location	Summary	WCLP Position
AB 1970	Jackson	Mental Health: Black Mental Health Navigator Certification.	Assembly Appropriations	As amended on April 1, 2024, this bill would require DHCS to develop criteria for a specialty certificate program and specialized training requirements for a Black Mental Health Navigator Certification.	
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

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AB 1851	Holden	Drinking water: schoolsites: lead testing pilot program.	Assembly	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 2300	Wilson	Medical devices: Di-(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP).	Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials	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 Appropriations	This bill would extend Covered California's authority to implement emergency rulemaking packages until January 1, 2030 (from 2025).	
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.	
AB 2914	Bonta	Health care service plan alternative standards of accessibility.	Assembly Health	This bill would require the Department of Managed Health Care to report to the Legislature on or before April 1, 2025, and on or before each April 1 thereafter, regarding alternative access proposals approved by the department in the prior year.	
SB 1078	Min	Language access.	Senate Health	This bill would create an Office of Language Access within the California Health & Human Services Agency to provide oversight, accountability, and coordination to ensure people with limited English proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to programs under the Agency.	Support
SB 1193	Menjivar	Airports: leaded aviation gasoline.	Senate Transportation	This bill would phase out the sale and distribution of leaded aviation fuel.	Co-Sponsor
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