



CALIFORNIA NEEDS TO ENACT A UNIVERSAL, SINGLE PAYER SYSTEM

The COVID 19 pandemic has taught us many lessons. One that was clear prior to the pandemic, but has been amplified over and over, is that our current health care system is broken – fragmented, costly, unjust and unable to keep Americans healthy and safe. This crisis forcefully illustrates the failures of our employment-based health insurance system. We have an opportunity in California, through the Governor's Healthy CA Commission and follow up legislation, to develop a health care system that guarantees health care to all Californians at less cost to the individual consumer and the government, while providing a standard set of benefits that covers all essential medical services, prescription drugs, durable medical equipment, and more.

California has been a clear leader for our country in acting swiftly and wisely to address COVID 19 – we must do the same to fix our broken health care system and lead the way for our country to provide health care to all through a single payer system, and eliminate the insurance companies whose bottom line is a higher priority than saving lives and caring for our people. We have seen how other countries with a universal system have been able to provide care more quickly and more successfully, giving their residents the peace of mind that during this pandemic they know that their health care needs, whether virus related or not, will be provided for without fear of cost or bankruptcy. It is time that the U.S. learns from these successful, life-saving and cost saving systems. California, the 5th largest economy in the world, should lead our country to create a true health care for all system.

The Governor's Healthy CA Commission was created to develop a plan for advancing progress toward achieving a health care delivery system for California that provides coverage and access through a unified financing system, including, but not limited to a single payer financing system. The Commission was scheduled to prepare an initial report to the Governor and Legislature by July 2020 with a final report in February 2021. We understand the strain COVID-19 has put on the Public Health Departments, and look forward to an initial report to the Governor and Legislature no later than January 1, 2021. If there is anything we can do to assist the Commission in its work, please call on us.

We believe that the best system for California to adopt is one that builds on our Medicare system, with improvements. We would propose expanding Medicare to cover everyone, from cradle to grave, and expand benefits to include those not currently covered by Medicare sufficiently or at all – vision, dental, hearing, long term supports and services, mental health, durable medical equipment. A Medicare for All – single payer plan would give California the ability to negotiate all drug and medical equipment prices which would save the system billions of dollars and allow us to provide health coverage to all Californians. Studies have shown that California already spends \$387 billion dollars a year on our broken system that denies care to people when they need it the most. Estimates to cover everyone in CA with expanded benefits are around \$4 billion dollars. With a thoughtful financing plan (there are many options we could consider) we can cover everyone, expand benefits, and save our government and the individual consumer money, while improving health outcomes. The COVID 19 pandemic has shown how ill prepared as a state and country we really are, how discriminatory our health care system is, and what we must do insure that every Californian has access to the health care they need, at costs they can afford, regardless of employment status, age, ability, race, immigration status, etc.

We urge you to advocate to reengage the Healthy CA Commission and develop a plan to move California, as the first in the nation, to develop an Improved Medicare for All -Single Payer system.