



April 1, 2019

The Honorable Jim Wood, Chair
Assembly Health Committee
State Capitol, Room 6005
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support – AB 4 (Bonta/Chiu/Santiago) Expanded Medi-Cal Eligibility

Dear Chairman Wood,

On behalf of the members of the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems and the millions of patients they serve, I am writing to voice our support for AB 4. This bill would extend full-scope Medi-Cal benefits to all income-eligible adults regardless of their immigration status. Immigration status remains a barrier to coverage and access for some Californians; this bill would help close a critical gap for those who remain without coverage.

California's 21 public health care systems are the core of the state's health care safety net, delivering high-quality care to all who need it, regardless of ability to pay or insurance status. Most patients seen in public health care systems are either Medi-Cal beneficiaries or remain uninsured. Public health care systems provide services to more than 2.85 million Californians annually, provide nearly 30 and 40 percent of hospital care to the state's Medi-Cal and uninsured populations, respectively, and provide over 10 million outpatient visits each year. Public health care systems also operate half of the state's top-level trauma and burn centers, and train half of all physicians in the state.

As safety-net providers whose mission is to serve all members of our community, public health care systems understand firsthand the importance that coverage can have on health, access to care, and financial stability for low-income populations. Public health care systems have played a critical role in numerous efforts to expand services or coverage to the uninsured, including the implementation of the Low Income Health Program, the recent effort to expand coverage to all children; and many local efforts that expand services, including access to a regular primary care for uninsured and low-income individuals.

Expanding coverage would build on California's impressive health reform implementation efforts, bring our state one step closer to achieving universal coverage, and support for more comprehensive care delivery. AB 4 would provide security for patients, and allow providers to focus on connecting patients with the right care in the most appropriate setting, supporting better care coordination and improved health.

For these reasons, we support AB 4. We would be pleased to further discuss our position with you and answer any questions you may have. Please contact Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, our Sacramento representative, at 916-272-0011 if you would like to follow-up. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sarah Hesketh".

Sarah Hesketh
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cc: The Honorable Rob Bonta
The Honorable David Chiu
The Honorable Miguel Santiago
The Honorable Members of the Assembly Health Committee
Scott Bain, Principal Consultant
Alex Khan, Republican Consultant
Maheen Ahmed, Legislative Aide, Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula
Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, Hurst Brooks Espinosa