



March 28, 2019

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

Subject: Support – AB 715 (Wood) Expanded Medi-Cal Aged and Disabled Eligibility

Dear Chairman Wood,

On behalf of the members of the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (CAPH) and the millions of patients they serve, I am writing to voice our support for your bill, AB 715. This bill expands Medi-Cal eligibility for persons 65 and over and for persons with disabilities to 138 percent of the federal poverty level through the Medi-Cal Aged and Disabled Program.

As you know, California's 21 public health care systems are the core of the state's health care safety net, delivering high-quality care to more than 2.85 million patients annually, regardless of ability to pay or insurance status. Most patients seen in public health care systems are either Medi-Cal beneficiaries or remain uninsured and statewide we 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. They also serve hundreds of thousands of Californians as their chosen source for primary, specialty, and hospital care. To a large extent, their patient population has complex and multiple medical needs. Filling their significant and multiple roles, public health care systems have a profound impact on the health care and health of millions of Californians.

Health insurance, and continuous enrollment in that health insurance, is the best way for patients to receive access to needed services, especially primary and preventive care. Continuous enrollment also assists plans and providers with quality improvement, as we can track patients over time, maintain regular patient engagement, and measure year over year outcomes. Under current law, there are inequalities in the income levels different groups need to qualify for Medi-Cal benefits. As a result, when adults switch between groups, for example by turning 65, it can create gaps in coverage. AB 715 corrects these inequities by raising the effective eligibility level for aged and disabled Medi-Cal recipients to 138 percent of federal poverty, bringing it in line with eligibility levels for most other adults, reducing the chance that a gap in coverage will occur.

For these reasons, we support AB 715. 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 Members of the Assembly Health Committee
Scott Bain, Principal Consultant
Alex Khan, Republican Consultant
Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, Hurst Brooks Espinosa