



March 3, 2021

The Honorable Richard Pan, Chair  
Senate Health Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2191  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Support – SB 56 (Durazo/Hueso) Medi-Cal: eligibility**

Dear Chairman Pan,

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 SB 56. This bill would extend full-scope Medi-Cal benefits to income-eligible adults ages 65 and over, 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.

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. Public health care systems include both county-operated or -affiliated facilities, as well as the University of California medical centers. Most patients seen in public health care systems are either Medi-Cal beneficiaries or remain uninsured. Statewide, these systems provide nearly 40% of all hospital care to the state's uninsured, and over 35% of all hospital care to Medi-Cal patients in their communities. Public health care systems also operate over 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 their communities, 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 young adults; and many local efforts that expand services, including access to regular and ongoing primary care for low-income uninsured individuals.

Expanding Medi-Cal to all income-eligible persons ages 65 and over would build on California's impressive health reform implementation efforts, bring our state one step closer to achieving universal coverage, and support the delivery of more comprehensive care. SB 56 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

outcomes.

For these reasons, we support SB 56. 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  
Senior Vice President of External Affairs  
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cc: The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo  
The Honorable Ben Hueso  
The Honorable Members of the Senate Health Committee  
Kimberly Chen, Consultant, Senate Health Committee  
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