



September 19, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Request for Signature – AB 1481 (Boerner)

Dear Governor Newsom:

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 request your signature on AB 1481 (Boerner). This bill would strengthen Medi-Cal coverage for pregnant people by ensuring that coverage is maintained during the transition from presumptive eligibility to full-scope coverage.

California's 21 public health care systems, which include county-operated and affiliated facilities and the five University of California medical centers, are the core of the state's health care safety net, delivering high-quality care to more than 3.7 million patients annually, regardless of ability to pay or insurance status. Public health care systems play an outsized role in caring for at-risk communities. Although they represent just six percent of all California hospitals, public health care systems provide 35% of all Medi-Cal and uninsured hospital care statewide. Public health care systems also provide a range of comprehensive services and train nearly half of all new doctors in hospitals across 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 and continue to play a critical role in expanding coverage and services to the uninsured, including recent efforts to expand coverage to all persons regardless of immigration status, and numerous other local efforts to expand access to regular and ongoing primary care for low-income uninsured individuals.

Today, California residents who believe they are pregnant and eligible for Medi-Cal can quickly gain temporary Medi-Cal coverage for a number of important ambulatory prenatal services, including clinic visits, medications, and emergency department care. Qualified providers, including many public health care systems, can grant this temporary coverage to low-income applicants based on self-attested information, pending their formal Medi-Cal application. Beneficiaries are provided with an insurance affordability program application, which allows them to apply for Medi-Cal, and completed applications must be submitted within two months.

Current Medi-Cal policy stipulates that to the extent an insurance affordability application is submitted during the prescribed time period, a beneficiary's presumptive eligibility coverage can be extended pending the Medi-Cal determination. However, this eligibility policy is not established in statute and often, Medi-Cal eligibility determinations can take longer than 60 days. During this time period, the temporary coverage can lapse, leading to a gap in coverage. This bill would establish this policy as a statutory protection and ensure continuous eligibility for all individuals who submit an application within the 60-day time period. Additionally, the bill would update the presumptive eligibility program name to be called Presumptive Eligibility for

Pregnant People, so that a more inclusive, gender-neutral term is used.

For the reasons described above, we support AB 1481. 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 916-753-0844 if you would like to follow-up. Thank you for your consideration and leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erica B. Murray", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erica B. Murray
President and CEO
California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems

cc: The Honorable Tasha Boerner
Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, Hurst Brooks Espinosa
Angela Pontes, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom