



PROTECT

the Health Care Safety Net

May 2, 2013

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg
President pro Tempore of the California Senate

The Honorable John Pérez
Speaker of the California Assembly

Dear President pro Tempore Steinberg and Speaker Pérez:

We write to underscore our united commitment to a successful implementation of the Affordable Care Act and full expansion of Medi-Cal by January 1, 2014. Fulfilling the promise of health reform for all Californians will require thoughtful evaluation of how we can extend coverage to as many uninsured Californians as possible, care for the remaining uninsured, and invest in local county health care programs and services to ensure the state has a health care safety net that survives and thrives.

We want to support your leadership in the pivotal policy choices that will be made in the next few weeks. In particular, as negotiations continue on both the special session legislation and on the budget, we want to highlight key policy positions of great importance to the 3-4 million remaining uninsured. We also want to raise concerns about the Administration's proposal to reduce funding for local county health care programs and services – jeopardizing the safety net and squandering opportunities to invest in improved health.

Our groups are providers of safety net care, as well as advocates for, and representatives of, those who work in safety net hospitals and clinics, and those who get care from California's health care safety net. Our specific requests of the Legislature and Governor are:

EXPANDING MEDI-CAL FULLY AND URGENTLY: We urge that California continue its successful, aggressive implementation of the ACA as the first necessary step toward health care for all. The easier and faster we enroll the uninsured in Medi-Cal, including continuing California's practice of enrolling recent lawful immigrants in Medi-Cal in 2014, the fewer people will be uninsured. Seamless, expeditious Medi-Cal enrollment is one way to maximize federal dollars into our health system, and help make needed investments in the program at the state level. At the same time, it will reduce the funding issues around the remaining uninsured. California should pass the full Medi-Cal expansion, with expedited and streamlined eligibility processes to make it possible to enroll thousands of the newly eligible by January 1, 2014.

CONTINUING HELP TO THE REMAINING UNINSURED: No matter how successful ACA implementation is, it is estimated that California will still have 3-4 million who remain uninsured. We must ensure sufficient funding is available to care for them, including county

health services, the Low-Income Health Program, other county services, and community clinics and health centers.

PROTECT COUNTY REALIGNMENT FUNDING AND SUPPORT A SAFETY NET THAT

SURVIVES AND THRIVES: Rather than erode local health funding, California needs to preserve sufficient resources in the healthcare safety net that:

(1) provides essential health services that everyone relies on (trauma/burn/ER, public health, physician training)

(2) is the provider of extensive health care services to millions of low-income and vulnerable populations, including the primary care, mental health, behavioral health, and social services needs of those in the community who can't afford to pay.

(3) provides care that is culturally and linguistically accessible and appropriate to the individuals community.

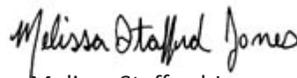
As you confront challenges and decisions on these issues, please contact us if we can provide additional information or answer specific questions. A major reason our groups have come together is to share information that is helpful to evaluating the policy choices before the state.

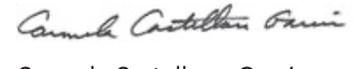
We look forward to following up, and to working with you on how best to meet the challenges and opportunities facing the health care safety net system as California moves to implement the ACA.

Sincerely,


Anthony Wright
Executive Director
Health Access California


Jon Youngdahl
Executive Director
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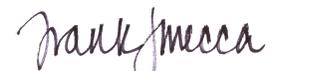

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cc: The Honorable Jerry Brown

Secretary Diana S. Dooley

The Honorable Members of the California Senate and Assembly