

TALKING POINTS: HEALTH4ALL 2021

- **IT'S ABOUT EQUITY.** Low-income undocumented Californians are locked out of access to health care and are dying from treatable conditions. No one should suffer or die due to lack of health care simply because of where they were born.
- **IT'S ABOUT HEALTH.** The Emergency Room is not a substitute for routine medical care. Regular check-ups can prevent painful, expensive chronic conditions before they begin. It makes economic sense to invest in preventive services.
- **IT'S ABOUT EVERYONE IN.** Health4All is necessary to get the Golden State to universal coverage. Undocumented immigrant adults are the largest single group of the remaining uninsured in California.
- **IT'S ABOUT URGENCY.** A long history of discriminatory policy and hateful political rhetoric has resulted in heightened fear and trauma for immigrant communities, who urgently need access to primary care, mental health, and other services that Medi-Cal offers.
- **IT'S ABOUT FAMILIES.** Health4All uplifts California's diverse families, including those with mixed statuses. More than 1 in 6 California kids has an undocumented parent. The parents, older siblings, and grandparents of these children continue to be systematically excluded from health care. When we keep parents and caregivers healthy, we strengthen and support entire families and communities.
- **IT'S ABOUT LEADERSHIP.** California led the way by passing "Health4All Kids" in 2015 and "Health4All Young Adults" in 2019. By covering older adults, we have an opportunity to set a new path for other states to follow.
- **IT'S ABOUT A BETTER HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.** California is stronger when everyone is covered and healthy. Our health care system works better and is more cost-efficient when we cover as many lives as possible, promote the well-being of all Californians, and create a more equitable system for all.

HEALTH4ALL ELDERS

- **IT'S ABOUT DIGNITY.** For decades, our elders have consistently put others' needs ahead of their own and sacrificed immensely to create a better future for their children and communities. Living longer often means facing greater health challenges. All seniors deserve to be able to access care and age with grace and dignity.
- **IT'S ABOUT RESPECT.** As California discusses the next steps toward universal health care, it is a betrayal of our core moral values to leave behind our most vulnerable communities, especially the elderly. Our policymakers must ensure services for all of our elders, including undocumented Californians.

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ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- **IT'S ABOUT CONTRIBUTION.** California has the 5th largest economy in the world, and every day the labor of undocumented immigrants grows the state's formidable GDP. Additionally, undocumented Californians contribute \$3.7 billion in state and local taxes, \$7 billion in federal taxes, and over \$40 billion in spending power to our economy every year. It is an injustice that our undocumented neighbors are excluded from the economic prosperity which they have helped to create.
- **IT'S ABOUT FAIRNESS.** From agriculture and construction to domestic and service work, immigrant workers are heavily represented in industries with a high rate of workplace injury and worker exploitation, as well as a low rate of employer-provided benefits, including health insurance, disability insurance, or any form of retirement. Through their sacrifices, undocumented Californians work to provide others with cheap goods and services, while being excluded from the benefits and services that support this labor.

COVID-19

- The COVID-19 pandemic makes it clear that our health is deeply interconnected with that of every other Californian. To recover from this crisis, we must recognize our shared humanity and care for each other, our neighbors, and those most vulnerable to falling through the gaps of our social safety net.
- COVID has not hit us all equally. Our low-income elders are especially vulnerable. Seniors make up a hugely disproportionate share of COVID cases and deaths and face barriers that make it harder for them to access care during times of social distancing.
- Undocumented seniors are at even greater risk because they are excluded from many vital services altogether.
- It makes no sense to exclude any group of people from primary and preventative care when responding to a public health emergency. We will not successfully combat coronavirus – or any future public health crisis – if our immigrant communities are hesitant to seek needed care because they are concerned about how to pay the bill afterward.
- No virus discriminates based on immigration status, and our health care system shouldn't either.

IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR **#HEALTH4ALL**

HEALTH4ALL: FULL-SCOPE MEDICAL FOR UNDOCUMENTED ADULTS

AB 4 (ARAMBULA)

Everyone Covered – No One Left Out: Addressing California's Health Care Crisis

Undocumented Californians are facing a health crisis. The Trump administration has separated families, increased deportations, and undermined immigrant communities' access to health care and the safety net. On top of this trauma, COVID-19 has hit undocumented immigrants especially hard, including millions of frontline and essential workers taking on disproportionate risk of exposure. The pandemic has further exacerbated racial and ethnic health disparities and has made it clear that access to comprehensive health care is necessary for every resident of our state. It is critical that our state act now to protect the health of all low-income Californians, regardless of where they were born. *AB 4 would provide full-scope Medi-Cal to all income-eligible adults by removing immigration status as an eligibility exclusion.*

Californians Barred from Health Care: Undocumented & Uninsured

California is home to the largest number of immigrants in the United States, including roughly 2.3 million undocumented immigrants who make up about 6% of the state population.¹ In 2018, undocumented Californians contributed \$3.7 billion in state taxes and local taxes, \$7 billion in federal taxes, and over \$40 billion in spending power to our economy.² They are overrepresented in jobs deemed “essential” during the pandemic,³ yet they are excluded from federal stimulus payments, unemployment insurance, and safety net programs for health care and food assistance.

While the state has set up temporary programs for the uninsured to access COVID-related care, these barely scratch the surface of the health crises that plague our immigrant communities. Undocumented families who have gone years without so much as a check-up may have unknown chronic conditions and need preventive care and treatment for all of their health concerns, not just COVID.

Lack of access to health coverage harms immigrant communities and our entire health care system. Health insurance protects individuals from financial distress and excessive out-of-pocket spending, encourages earlier diagnosis of chronic conditions, improves use of preventive services, and reduces preventable mortality.⁴ No one in our state should have to wait until an emergency to be able to access health care.

Towards Universal Health Care Coverage

The expansion of Medi-Cal, regardless of immigration status, to all income-eligible children in 2016 and young adults in 2020 ensured comprehensive care for hundreds of thousands of young people and a healthier California overall. Covering all adults by passing AB 4 is the next logical step to close a significant gap that remains in our health care system.

By removing immigration status as an eligibility barrier to Medi-Cal, California can build a more universal, equitable health care system for all who call California home. Health care is a human right, and our health system is stronger when everyone is included.

For more information, please contact Orville Thomas (othomas@caimmigrant.org) with the California Immigrant Policy Center and Jose Torres-Casillas (jtorres@health-access.org) with Health Access California.

¹ <https://immigrantdataca.org/indicators/immigration-status/>

² <https://immigrantdataca.org/indicators/economic-contributions#/?immig=3>

³ <https://immigrantdataca.org/indicators/industries-and-occupations#/>

⁴ Dietz, Miranda and Laurel Lucia, et al. November 2018. “California’s Health Coverage Gains to Erode Without Further State Action.” UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and UC Berkeley Labor Center.

HEALTH4ALL: MEDI-CAL COMPLETO PARA ADULTOS INDOCUMENTADOS

AB 4 (ARAMBULA)

Cobertura para todos - Nadie se queda fuera: Abordar la crisis de atención médica de California

Los californianos indocumentados se enfrentan a una crisis de salud. La administración de Trump ha separado familias, ha aumentado las deportaciones y ha socavado el acceso de las comunidades de inmigrantes a la atención médica y a la red de seguridad. Además de este trauma, el COVID-19 ha golpeado especialmente a los inmigrantes indocumentados, incluyendo a millones de trabajadores de primera línea y esenciales que asumen un riesgo desproporcionado de exposición. La pandemia ha exacerbado aún más las disparidades raciales y étnicas en materia de salud y ha dejado claro que el acceso a la atención médica integral es necesario para todos los residentes de nuestro estado. Es fundamental que nuestro estado actúe ahora para proteger la salud de todos los californianos de bajos ingresos, independientemente de su lugar de nacimiento. *El proyecto de ley AB 4 proporcionaría un Medi-Cal completo a todos los adultos que reúnan los requisitos de ingresos, eliminando el estatus de inmigración como una exclusión de elegibilidad.*

Californianos excluidos de la atención médica: Indocumentados y sin seguro médico

California es el hogar del mayor número de inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos, incluyendo aproximadamente 2.3 millones de inmigrantes indocumentados que representan alrededor del 6% de la población del estado.¹ En 2018, los californianos indocumentados contribuyeron con \$3,7 mil millones en impuestos estatales y locales, \$7 mil millones en impuestos federales y más de \$40 mil millones en poder de gasto para nuestra economía.² Están sobrerrepresentados en puestos de trabajo considerados “esenciales” durante la pandemia.³ Sin embargo, están excluidos de los pagos federales de estímulo, del seguro de desempleo y de los programas de la red de seguridad para la atención sanitaria y la asistencia alimentaria.

Aunque el estado ha establecido programas temporales para que los no asegurados accedan a la atención relacionada con el COVID-19, éstos apenas arañan la superficie de las crisis sanitarias que asolan a nuestras comunidades de inmigrantes. Las familias indocumentadas que han pasado años sin ni siquiera una revisión pueden tener enfermedades crónicas desconocidas y necesitan atención preventiva y tratamiento para todos sus problemas de salud, no sólo para el COVID-19.

La falta de acceso a la cobertura sanitaria perjudica a las comunidades de inmigrantes y a todo nuestro sistema sanitario. El seguro médico protege a las personas de las dificultades financieras y de los gastos excesivos de bolsillo, fomenta el diagnóstico temprano de las enfermedades crónicas, mejora el uso de los servicios preventivos y reduce los casos de mortalidad que se pueden evitar.⁴ Nadie en nuestro estado debería tener que esperar hasta una emergencia para poder acceder a la atención sanitaria.

Hacia un sistema de cobertura sanitaria universal

La expansión de Medi-Cal, sin importar el estatus migratorio, a todos los niños elegibles por sus ingresos en 2016 y a los adultos jóvenes en 2020 garantizó una atención integral para cientos de miles de jóvenes y una California más saludable en general. La cobertura de todos los adultos mediante la aprobación de AB 4 es el siguiente paso lógico para cerrar una brecha significativa que permanece en nuestro sistema de salud.

Al eliminar el estatus de inmigración como una barrera de elegibilidad para Medi-Cal, California puede construir un sistema de salud más universal y equitativo para todos los que consideran a California su hogar. El cuidado de la salud es un derecho humano, y nuestro sistema de salud es más fuerte cuando todos están incluidos.

Para obtener más información, póngase en contacto con Orville Thomas (othomas@caimmigrant.org) con el Centro de Políticas para Inmigrantes de California y José Torres-Casillas (jtorres@health-access.org) con Health Access California.

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