

This Pandemic Has Not Discriminated Against Anyone

Congress Must Not Discriminate in Providing Relief

March 24, 2020

As California-based nonprofit organizations, we are writing to encourage you to ensure that any COVID-19 (novel Coronavirus) Relief Package includes access to testing and treatment for suspected COVID-19 for all, regardless of immigration status, through emergency Medi-Cal. We are all in this together.

As you know, California is blessed with the nation's largest immigrant population. More than a quarter of us were born outside of the U.S. Immigrants comprise a significant percentage of our essential workforce, including almost one-third of healthcare workers and 70% of agricultural workers. As others shelter in place, these workers are classified as "essential" for the daily lives of all Californians.

Yet restrictive Medicaid eligibility rules exclude many immigrants from obtaining non-emergency health services, including testing and treatment for COVID-19. If these workers become ill, their families will suffer and so will the state. When combined with the Administration's public charge regulations, these restrictions pose a serious public health risk for our state.

SOLUTION: *Provide Emergency Medicaid for Suspected COVID-19 Infections*

Ensure that during this public health emergency, testing and immediate and long-term treatment of health conditions is provided by Medicaid for all who need it, regardless of their immigration status.

Provide clear assurances, supported by regulatory text, that use of these services through emergency Medicaid will not be considered as a negative factor in a public charge assessment.

This modification is critical for the health and well-being of everyone in our state and in the country at large. If you have any questions, please reach out to Sarah Dar, sdar@calimmigrant.org; Gabrielle Lessard, lessard@nilc.org or Carl Bergquist, cbergquist@chirla.org. Thank you for continuing to work on behalf of all Californians.

Sincerely,

California Immigrant Policy Center
National Immigration Law Center
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights

APLA Health
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - CA
BORDER ANGELS
Buen Vecino
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Alliance for Retired Americans
California Food Policy Advocates
California Health Professional Student Alliance
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Physicians Alliance
Children Now
Community Action Marin
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
Disability Rights California
Drug Policy Alliance
Family Voices of CA
Fathers and Families of San Joaquin
Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Korean Community Center of the East Bay
Korean Resource Center (KRC)
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Mi Familia Vota
National Health Law Program
NextGen California
Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network (SIREN)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
SSG/API Forward Movement
Standing Together and Nurturing Dissent (STAND Bay Area)
Street Level Health Project
TODEC Legal Center
UndocuHealth Advocates
Vigilant Love
Voices for Progress
Western Center on Law and Poverty