



YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Use Your Voice

March 14th, 2022

The Honorable Dr. Jim Wood, Chair
Assembly Health Committee
Capitol Office, 1020 N Street, Room 390
Sacramento, CA 94249

Re: SUPPORT--AB 1995 (Arambula): Eliminating Medi-Cal Premiums and Copayments

DEAR DR. WOOD,

Youth Leadership Institute (yli) is writing to express our support for AB 1995 (Arambula), which will ensure low-income Californians can access the health care services that they need to stay healthy and thrive without having to pay costly monthly Medi-Cal premiums or copayments. As an organization that partners with youth to advocate for the wellbeing of our communities, access to quality holistic and culturally appropriate health care is among the key issues our youth fight for everyday (see our [Health Justice Platform](#)).

Medi-Cal coverage provides a solid foundation to meet the health care needs of children, families, and disabled people by providing free or low-cost health insurance to low-income and other vulnerable populations. Among children, Medi-Cal coverage improves health, reduces disabilities, and increases education attainment and economic stability later in life. For people with disabilities, Medi-Cal allows them to live independently and avoid costly institutionalization.

However, currently in California, over 535,000 low-income children, pregnant people, and people with disabilities are required to pay monthly premiums to continue their health care coverage through Medi-Cal. While these monthly premiums do not yield significant cost savings for the State, they do create an additional economic burden for people already struggling financially, often competing with other basic necessities like food, rent, and diapers. AB 1995 will eliminate

monthly Medi-Cal premiums for children, pregnant people, and people with disabilities, reducing coverage churn in the Medi-Cal program and allowing people to keep more of their income needed to survive economic hardship. Eliminating these costly premiums will help correct several inequities, including by allowing disabled people to keep more of their income for home purchases, retirement, and other necessities.

yli works directly with low-income youth of color across the state - many of whom are just one medical incident away from financial ruin. We strive everyday to support them to make positive change in their communities - but they must have access to basic health care in order to take on the critical work of community change.

For these reasons, we support AB 1995 (Arambula) and respectfully request your "aye" vote so that California can continue to demonstrate our commitment to health care affordability and access while correcting the unfair tax that Medi-Cal premiums and copayments place on low-income families with children, pregnant people, and people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PATRICIA BARAHONA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Youth Leadership Institute