



August 28, 2017

Healthy California Response to Speaker Rendon's Select Committee on Healthcare

The Healthy California campaign formed in February of this year to move forward the Healthy California Act -SB 562 (Lara & Atkins) in light of the aggressive federal attacks on our healthcare. During the last six months we have grown support for SB 562 to over 650 organizations and more than 6 million Californians.

We know that with or without a vote in Congress, Trump and GOP leaders have already set into motion actions that unravel the Affordable Care Act and that are leading to Covered California rate increases of up to 30% in many areas around the state. As we have seen nationally and in California, the grassroots are calling for a single payer solution and standing up for healthcare as a right. It is in this context that we see urgency in moving forward SB 562, which would guarantee healthcare to all California residents including: medical, dental, vision, mental health, prescription drugs and much more.

In June, Speaker Rendon "decided SB 562 will remain in the Assembly Rules Committee until further notice," putting on hold the only real solution to our healthcare crisis. Last Thursday, the Speaker announced that he is creating a "Select Committee" on universal coverage. While the Committee's creation is a clear reaction to the statewide pressure from our campaign and grassroots supporters, it's important to note that this Committee cannot vote on SB 562 or amendments to the bill. Instead it continues to delay the legislative process.

We are concerned that given the influence of the insurance and pharmaceutical industries on the legislature, this Select Committee will not be accessible to Californians who suffer under our current healthcare system. The Healthy California campaign insists that this Select Committee must hold hearings that are fully accessible to all Californians, by holding evening and weekend meetings in locations around the state, including rural areas, major metropolitan cities and which are broadcast for those who cannot attend in person.

HEALTHY CALIFORNIA

770 L Street, Suite 1480
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone:
800.745.3090

Web: HealthyCA.org

Health care policy and creating a new healthcare system are complex issues, especially in a state comprising the fifth largest global economy. These issues deserve robust legislative debate through a democratic process via public hearings in the Assembly. We need to have this debate through the established democratic process via public hearings in the Assembly, and have amendments prepared to be added to the bill during that process. However, we will participate in the hearings of the Select Committee and urge that the goal of the Committee be to address any concerns with the current bill, and return it to the Assembly as soon as possible

It is clear that the grassroots support for single payer cannot be stopped and our campaign to pass SB 562 very much continues. We are talking to Californians at their doors and in their neighborhoods in every corner of the Golden State. The people of California cannot wait. The point is to achieve healthcare justice through a system of guaranteed healthcare that puts patients before profits. Let that be our guiding light.

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