



® May 1, 2017

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Senator Ricardo Lara
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 222 (Hernandez) – Inmates: health care enrollment.
As Introduced February 2, 2017 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard May 8, 2017 - Senate Appropriations Committee

Dear Senator Lara,

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) writes in support of Senate Bill 222 by Senator Ed Hernandez. This measure would increase access to critical health care services for Medi-Cal beneficiaries immediately after incarceration.

Since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medi-Cal beneficiaries who become justice involved have their benefits suspended for one year or until they are released, whichever comes first. If an individual is incarcerated for longer than one year their Medi-Cal coverage is terminated. Individuals who lose coverage due to longer-term incarceration need to reapply for coverage, a time- and labor-intensive process. Although some county jails, and all state prisons, provide varying degrees of assistance to help individuals apply for Medi-Cal prior to release, this process is not efficient for those who have their coverage terminated.

SB 222 would provide individuals who were previously enrolled in Medi-Cal with immediate access to Medi-Cal benefits after their release from local or state detention facilities. Specifically, this bill requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to extend the suspension of Medi-Cal benefits of justice involved persons until they are released, regardless of the length of the incarceration. This suspended status extension allows for the prompt return of Medi-Cal benefits after individuals are released, without the need to reapply for coverage. Immediate access to benefits upon release can assure continuity of care while reducing the demand for intensive, costly health care services down the road, which could ultimately save money for state and local government agencies.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports SB 222 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at dkernan@counties.org or 916.650.8131.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'Darby Kernan'.

Darby Kernan
Legislative Representative

cc: The Honorable Ed Hernandez, California State Senate
Members and Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus