



May 8, 2020

Dear Governor Newsom,

Thank you for your leadership during the novel coronavirus pandemic. In this crisis, you have shown that California can move swiftly to ensure safety for its residents. We are writing on behalf of Healthy California Now: a statewide, non-partisan coalition of community, consumer, labor, health, disability, LGBTQ, business, and political organizations committed to building and broadening the movement to guarantee health care for all Californians. Our affiliate membership represents 6 million Californians. We are grateful for the meeting you granted us with Dr. Alice Chen on your behalf in November, in regards to the formation of the Healthy California for All Commission.

The COVID-19 pandemic is teaching us many lessons. One that was clear prior to the outbreak, but has now been amplified repeatedly, is that our current health care system is broken — fragmented, costly, unjust, and unable to keep Americans healthy and safe. This crisis forcefully illustrates the failures of our employment-based health insurance system. We have an opportunity in California, through the Healthy California for All Commission and follow-up legislation, to develop a system that guarantees health care to all Californians at less cost to patients and the government, while providing a guaranteed standard of care that covers all medical services, prescription drugs, durable medical equipment, and more.

Thanks to you, California has formed a paradigm in addressing COVID-19 — we call on you to further this effort and fix our broken health care system, to lead the way for our country to provide health care to all through a single payer system. This means eliminating the unjust role of insurance companies, whose bottom line is a higher priority to them than saving lives and caring for our people. We have seen how other countries with a universal system have been able to provide care more quickly and more successfully, giving their residents more peace of mind — that during this pandemic they know that their health care needs, whether COVID-19 related or not, will be provided for without fear of cost or bankruptcy.

We believe that the best system for California to adopt is one that builds on our Medicare system, with improvements. We would propose expanding Medicare to cover everyone, from cradle to grave, and expand benefits to include those not currently covered by Medicare sufficiently or at all: vision, dental, hearing, long term supports and services, mental health, reproductive health, and durable medical equipment. A “Medicare for All” style, single payer plan would give California the ability to negotiate all drug and medical equipment prices, which would save the system billions of dollars and allow us to provide health coverage to all Californians.

As we have seen so many times in history, out of a crisis is opportunity. The United Kingdom came out of the rubble of World War II providing its people with a vision of hope and created the National Health Service (NHS). Despite what might seem like impossible circumstances (an unemployment rate at an all-time high, a bankrupt treasury, devastated infrastructure, fierce opposition by those with strong financial interest, and newspapers predicting disaster), its leaders pursued an agenda that would advance the Country and bring its people hope for a better life. Out of the COVID-19 crisis, California can do the same and lead the nation in

hope, and the promise that its people can get the care they need without fear of job loss, bankruptcy, or dependence on other family members' coverage.

You established the Healthy California for All Commission to advance progress toward a health care delivery system for California that provides coverage and access through a unified financing system, including, but not limited to a single payer financing system. We urge you to re-engage the Commission and develop a plan to move California, as the first in the nation, to develop an improved Medicare for All, Single Payer System.

We are here to assist and help you advance this promising vision for California and for the nation.

Thank you again for your leadership and commitment to the people of California.

Sincerely,

Cindy Young
President, Healthy California Now

Sal Rosselli
President, National Union of Healthcare Workers
Vice President, Healthy California Now

Dan Geiger
Co-Director, Business Alliance for a Healthy California
Treasurer, Healthy California Now

Bay Area for Bernie
Paul O'Rourke Babb, Butte County Health Care Coalition
Jodi Reid, California Alliance for Retired Americans
Georgia Brewer, California OneCare
Jeff Green, California Partnership
Art Persyko, California Progressive Alliance Single Payer Action Team
Randy Hicks, Californians for Disability Rights
Eddie Kurtz, Courage California
Carol Bardoff, First Wednesdays San Leandro
Barry Hermanson, Green Party of California
Pat Snyder and Dan Hodges, Healthcare for All — California
Thomas Brandon, Int'l Assoc. of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Western Region
Karen Reside, Long Beach Gray Panthers
Dr. Luis Ortiz-Franco, Los Amigos of Orange County
Dr. Henry Abrons, Physicians for a National Health Program — California
Dr. Bill Honigman, Progressive Democrats of America, California
Danett Abbott-Wicker, Progressive Democrats of America, Orange County Chapter
San Francisco Berniecrats
Greg Miller, Santa Clara County Single Payer Health Care Coalition
Harry Baker, SEIU Local 1021 Medicare for All Committee
Don Bechler, Single Payer Now
Stephen Vernon, MFT; Norma Myers, MFT; Ernest Isaacs, MFT — Therapists for Single Payer
Mario Yedidia, UNITE HERE, Local 2

|
Perrie Briskin, UAW Local 2865 [University of California Student Workers]

Paul Brooks, University Professional and Technical Employees, CWA 9119

Marilyn Albert, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club

Ruth Carter, Chair, California Democratic Party Senior Caucus

Jenni Chang, State and County Delegate, Democratic Party, AD-43

Brandon Harami, State Delegate AD-19 and California Democratic Party Legislation Committee

Eric Vance, Organizer, Healthy California Now; District Delegate Candidate, Democratic Party, CA-15