



Senator Scott Wiener, 11th Senate District

Senate Bill 770 – Unified Healthcare Financing

SUMMARY

SB 770 establishes tangible steps on a concrete timeline toward creating a system of guaranteed healthcare for all California residents that will provide better care at lower cost by:

- Directing the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services (HHS) Agency to pursue waiver discussions with the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to facilitate the creation of a unified healthcare financing system;
- Requiring the Secretary to utilize a stakeholder process to provide input into the waiver discussions and reports to the Legislature;
- Requiring the Secretary to provide an interim report to the chairs of the Assembly and Senate Budget and Health Committees no later than January 1, 2025, that details the agency’s policy priorities and preliminary analysis of issues related to the federal discussions, as well as a summary of the input received to date through the stakeholder engagement process. The report shall also include statutory language for a waiver authorization;
- Requiring the Secretary, no later than June 1, 2025, to complete the drafting of the waiver framework, inclusive of input gathered through the stakeholder engagement process, make the draft available to the public on the agency’s internet website, and shall hold a 45-day public comment period thereafter.
- Requiring the secretary to provide to the Legislature and Governor a report that communicates the finalized waiver framework, informed by public comment received, and sets forth the specific elements to be included in a formal waiver application consistent with the outcome of the discussions with the federal government by November 1, 2025;

The fragmentation and inequities of our current healthcare system – from varying health plan eligibility requirements to the continued lack of effective oversight of these health plans – is harming California residents. These shortcomings result in severe and sometimes lethal gaps in

medically necessary health coverage and disproportionately impact historically and systematically marginalized groups.

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM

California has taken important steps to expand access to healthcare for all – most recently expanding Medi-Cal coverage to adults 50 years and older regardless of immigration status – but the state has also recognized that the status quo of healthcare financing is no longer working and that innovative solutions must be explored.

The 2019 Budget Act charged the Healthy California for All Commission with developing a plan that includes options for advancing a health care delivery system in California to provide better care that costs less through a unified financing (UF) system, including, but not limited to, a single-payer financing system, for all California residents.

In their final report, the Commission summarizes the characteristics of the new “unified financing” system as:

- All California residents will be entitled to receive a standard package of health care services;
- This package could include Long Term Care Support and Services, which would relieve huge and growing burdens that are falling on millions of families;
- Entitlement will not vary by age, employment status, disability status, income, immigration status, or other characteristics; and
- Distinctions among Medicare, Medi-Cal, employer-sponsored insurance, and individual market coverage will be eliminated within the system of unified financing.

The report estimates that universal coverage through a unified financing system would save 4,000 or more lives annually, and finds that, “absent a shift to UF, California will incur an additional \$500 billion in medical costs over the next decade.”

SOLUTION

California has the ability to establish a system of guaranteed healthcare for all and provide better care that costs less. SB 770 makes this potential real by establishing a specific statutory pathway for pursuit of this goal.

SUPPORT

- **Healthy California Now Coalition (sponsor)**
- Butte County Health Care Coalition
- California Alliance for Retired Americans
- California Conference of Machinists
- California Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO
- California Pan - Ethnic Health Network
- California OneCare
- California Teamsters Public Affairs Council
- Central Coast Alliance for a Sustainable Economy
- Clinica Romero
- Consumer Watchdog
- Courage California
- Gray Panthers of San Francisco
- Health Access
- Health Care for All – California
- Healthcare for All Working Group
- Healthcare Action Committee
- Inland Empire Immigrant Youth Collective
- Inland Equity Partnership
- League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) of Riverside Council 3190
- National Union of Healthcare Workers
- Physicians for National Health Program
- Service Employees International Union California (SEIU)
- Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)
- Therapists for Single Payer
- UNITE-HERE, AFL-CIO
- Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club
- Western Center on Law and Poverty

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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