

Making Health Care More Affordable Helps CA's Communities

The Issue

Our nation's health care system, especially in California where the cost of living is second highest in the country, is financially inaccessible for too many working families. Hospitals, a pillar of the health care system and often the largest employer in their community, know that something must be done and have been working for years to bring down costs. But making a dent in the health care affordability problem will take an equal effort from others: pharmaceutical companies, physicians, insurance companies, and more. California's hospitals stand ready to do our part to continue to reduce costs and are eager to work with other stakeholders to tackle this challenge.

What's Needed

There are several practical, achievable steps that can be taken to begin to reduce health care costs for consumers, including:

- **Expand on current efforts to reduce the number of Californians without health insurance.** The state has already expanded Medi-Cal coverage to undocumented adults age 19-25; provided insurance subsidies for families earning between 400 and 600% of the federal poverty level; and enacted a state-level individual mandate for coverage. It's now time to get California from ~93% coverage to 100% coverage.
- **Make full use of the clinical expertise of California's health care providers.** By increasing the use of nurse practitioners and other mid-level providers by allowing them to practice without physician supervision, California can make more primary, preventative, and low-cost care options available – all while freeing up physician time for more acute needs.
- **Reduce the financial burden of outdated or unnecessary regulations.** Many of the regulations for the licensing and certification of health care facilities and other providers no longer align with today's changing health care environment, yet still account for a significant amount of cost within the health care system.



California hospital costs are among the lowest in the nation.

38%

of CA's hospitals operate at a loss at a time when insurance and pharmaceutical companies are seeing record profits.

Per capita hospital costs in CA are

5.4%

lower than the national average.

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