



CITY COUNCILMEMBER
RIGEL ROBINSON
 DISTRICT 7

14

CONSENT CALENDAR
 March 23, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Rigel Robinson (Author), Councilmember Terry Taplin
 (Co-Sponsor)
 Subject: Support for AB 1400: Guaranteed Health Care for All

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution in support of Assembly Bill 1400, which would establish the California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act and create CalCare, a single-payer health insurance program for all California residents that is comprehensive, uniform, equitable and governed by the CalCare board.

BACKGROUND

AB 1400, introduced by Assemblymembers Ash Kalra, Alex Lee, and Miguel Santiago would do the following:

- (1) Establish a comprehensive universal single-payer health care coverage system for all California residents without discrimination, ensuring that affordable access to health care is a human right.
- (2) Establish a CalCare board of nine members that would have jurisdiction over enrollment policies, negotiate pricing, secure and allocate funding, and oversee all federal waivers.
- (3) Establish the CalCare Trust Fund in the State Treasury to provide a continuous and prudent source of funding for this program.

While the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has done much to ameliorate the crisis of insufficient healthcare coverage in California, many residents are still left without adequate means to access necessary medical resources. AB 1400 seeks to address this issue by implementing a universal single-payer health care coverage system. Specifically, this bill calls for government oversight that would establish a cost control system, offer a wide range of medical benefits equal to or of greater quality than existing state and private provision, establish working relationships with approved providers for accountability, and increase accessibility for disabled persons and underrepresented groups to reach the ultimate goal of eliminating health care disparities in the state of California.

In terms of eligibility and enrollment, every resident of the state of California would not only be eligible but *entitled* to CalCare membership, without any fees. Additionally, to address the continuously increasing population of out-of-state university students in the

state, CalCare would allow higher education institutions to purchase coverage for non-resident students.¹ CalCare also addresses high-cost prescription drugs and includes dietary and nutrition therapies, in addition to coverage for long-term services currently denied under many plans.

The state of California has a diverse population that requires a flexible health care coverage program to meet a range of needs. This legislation is a step in that direction, providing culturally-competent services through accommodations such as language interpretation, translation, and more integrated services for disabled Californians.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has only amplified the imperative for a more comprehensive, accessible, and transparent health care coverage system. CalCare would establish the CalCare Trust Fund in the State treasury, which would maintain an appropriate reserve of funding for responding to health emergencies such as epidemics, pandemics, or natural disasters.

The Berkeley City Council should support AB 1400 and adopt the attached resolution.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

None.

CONTACT PERSON

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Crystal Choi, Intern

Attachment:

1: Resolution

2: Bill text

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1400

¹ <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/press-room/uc-s-california-student-enrollment-climbs-fourth-straight-year>

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ASSEMBLY BILL 1400 (KALRA, LEE, & SANTIAGO),
THE CALCARE ACT

WHEREAS, every Californian should have a right to health care; and

WHEREAS, while the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) brought many improvements in health care and health care coverage, it still leaves many Californians without coverage or with inadequate coverage; and

WHEREAS, Californians, as individuals, employers, and taxpayers have experienced a rise in the cost of healthcare and health care coverage in recent years, including rising premiums, deductibles, and copays, as well as restricted provider networks and high out-of-network charges; and

WHEREAS, businesses have also experienced increases in the costs of health care benefits for their employees, and many employers are shifting a larger share of the cost of coverage to their employees or dropping coverage entirely; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 1400 (AB 1400) would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would create a "comprehensive universal single-payer health care coverage program and a health care cost control system" for the benefit of all Californian residents; and

WHEREAS, AB 1400 would consistently cover all Californians, because coverage is based on residency, not a person's changing income or employment status; and

WHEREAS, AB 1400 would eliminate out of control co-pays and high deductibles, and reduce costs by cutting out insurance company waste and duplication; and

WHEREAS, AB 1400 would give consumers the freedom to choose their doctor, and would manage prescription drug costs; and

WHEREAS, AB 1400 is sponsored by the California Nurses Association; and

WHEREAS, CalCare would establish the CalCare Trust Fund in the State treasury for creating cost controls and maintaining a reserve of funding for responding to health emergencies.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley endorsed AB 1400, the CalCare Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to Assemblymember Ash Kalra, Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, Senator Nancy Skinner, and Governor Gavin Newsom.

