



Medi-Cal: Eligibility

This bill:

- Requires that Medi-Cal benefits be extended to those over 65 who qualify for all requirements except immigration status

Fiscal Impact:

- The Assembly Appropriations Committee estimated the total cost at \$120 million.

MAP's Perspective on S.B. 29

MAP supports this bill.

Healthcare in the latter stages of life is especially important to the massive immigrant workforce that drives California's economy, including immigrant farm workers. The strenuous working conditions that the farm workers endure make them susceptible to a wide range of adverse health effects and diseases, a fact that is more pertinent than ever within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, there is a new layer of fear settling over the immigrant community as the coronavirus sweeps across the United States. Questions such as whether going to the hospital will hurt their chances of becoming a legal permanent resident or whether seeking treatment could result in deportation prevent farm workers from seeking the care they need, despite the fact that they may be the most vulnerable population. Thus, it becomes more important than ever that healthcare benefits be extended to those over 65, especially since the older generation is more vulnerable to the disease.

Youth Perspective

- Constantly bending over to harvest crops can render farmworkers unable to walk without excruciating pain later on in life; prolonged exposure to pesticides condemn our farm workers to a slow and painful death from throat cancer; PTSD and depression drive farmworkers to despair and suicide. As the children and grandchildren of immigrants, we find it unconscionable to treat these hardworking people, who feed our entire nation, as anything other than respected fellow human beings.
- Undocumented people make up 10% of California's workforce.
- Undocumented workers are estimated to add \$3 billion in state and local taxes annually.
- UC Berkeley's Labor Center estimates that 1.4 million Californians are prohibited from health care due to their immigration status. This means that undocumented Californians are the largest group of uninsured individuals in the state.

Catholic Perspective

- As Catholics, we recognize that one of Jesus' most basic commandments to us is to care for the sick, which California's robust public healthcare system helps us accomplish.
- However, we are morally obligated to extend our hands to any and all who need healthcare, including our nation's population of elderly undocumented immigrants, who, due to their age, are susceptible to health problems. It is critical that we provide them with the same love and care that we provide to their documented counterparts.
- We believe that healthcare is a basic human right, and to deny it to anyone based on their immigration status is unethical.

