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BERKELEY, CA 94704
GREENLINING.ORG

February 23, 2016

Diana Dooley, Chair
Covered California Board

Peter Lee
Executive Director, Covered California

Covered California
1601 Exposition Blvd
Sacramento, CA 95815

Re: Covered California's 1332 Waiver Forum – Allow Undocumented Californians and DACA Recipients to Purchase a Health Plan through Covered California

Dear Ms. Dooley and Mr. Lee,

I am writing on behalf of the Greenlining Institute to urge Covered California to seek a 1332 Waiver that allows undocumented people and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients to purchase a health plan through Covered California, with their own money.

The Greenlining Institute is a statewide policy and advocacy organization that strives to achieve racial and economic justice. We believe that race, income, and documentation status should never be barriers to good health. Over the past two years we have conducted interviews with undocumented young people in California who have shared their barriers to accessing health care. One young man when asked what he would tell decision-makers if given the chance said,

"I don't expect you to understand me. I don't expect you to know what it feels like to lie to your brother that he's going to go to the doctor when I know that I can't afford to take him. I do expect you to help us because we're still humans. We still get sick and sickness does not discriminate."

Current policy specifically excludes undocumented people and DACA recipients from purchasing their own health insurance through Covered California due to their immigration status.¹ It does not reflect our values as a state, or serve the common good, to leave hundreds of thousands of workers, students, and family members without treatment for preventable ailments. Allowing undocumented people and DACA recipients to access

¹ In 2010 Congress passed the Affordable Care Act that excluded undocumented immigrants from participation in state Exchanges and the Medicaid expansion. Existing rules excluded the undocumented from Medi-Cal were maintained. In August of 2012, President Obama's administration established regulations preventing those approved for Deferred Action from access to exchanges under the Affordable Care Act.

Covered California ensures everyone has the opportunity to view and choose from a wide range of health care plans.

Currently there is legislation moving in Sacramento that would make our healthcare system more inclusive. One of the provisions in SB 10 (Lara) would direct the state to apply for a waiver under Section 1332 of the Affordable Care Act, to allow all Californians regardless of immigration status to purchase health care coverage through Covered California with their own money. While this proposal does not include subsidies, it is a significant step forward as it removes an unjust barrier to health coverage and would make California's implementation of the ACA more inclusive.

Covered California can set a powerful model for the nation by being the first statewide exchange open to all residents regardless of immigration status. We urge Covered California to support the above mentioned proposal by seeking the 1332 Waiver. Let's ensure that we fulfill with the vision of the Affordable Care Act by expanding opportunities for health coverage for all who call California home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Orson Aguilar'.

Orson Aguilar
President
The Greenlining Institute

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Galace'.

Anthony Galace
Bridges to Health Director
The Greenlining Institute