



March 1, 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 Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN) 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.

SIREN is an immigrant rights non-profit organization whose mission is to empower low-income immigrants in Silicon Valley through community organizing, immigration legal services, and policy advocacy. Our organization works closely with DACA-recipients and undocumented community members who, due to their immigration status, are unable to purchase health insurance through Covered California in order to address their medical needs. This issue is particularly acute for those immigrants who are ineligible for full-scope Medi-Cal or are unable to purchase coverage through their employer and, as a result, refrain from seeking medical care until their health concerns exacerbate into medical emergencies. These community members are in great need of coverage options to make sure they are able to adequately take care of their health.



Current policy specifically excludes undocumented people and DACA recipients from purchasing their own health insurance through Covered California due to their immigration status.<sup>1</sup> 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 Covered California ensures everyone has the opportunity to view and choose from a wider 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.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [priya@siren-bayarea.org](mailto:priya@siren-bayarea.org) or (408) 453-3003 x103.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Priya Murthy", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Priya Murthy

Policy and Organizing Program Director

Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)

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<sup>1</sup> 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.