

California Leaders Must End Unjust Medi-Cal Exclusion Once and for All

A Timeline of Policy Changes that Have Expanded Access to Comprehensive Medi-Cal Coverage

MARCH 2022 | BY MONICA DAVALOS, ADRIANA RAMOS-YAMAMOTO, AND MARCELA SALVADOR

Undocumented Californians and their families are deeply engrained in the state's social fabric — they are members of the state's workforce, pay taxes, attend schools, own businesses, and raise families who invest in local communities. Yet, racist and xenophobic federal policies have historically excluded them from accessing comprehensive coverage through Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid program), also known as full-scope Medi-Cal. In recent years, California has expanded eligibility for full-scope Medi-Cal to undocumented immigrants, including children and young adults up to age 25 as well as adults age 50 and older.

This year, state leaders have the opportunity and resources to expand access to income-eligible undocumented adults ages 26 to 49 — ending the unjust exclusion once and for all. By advancing this policy change along with investing in other equitable health policies that focus on the well-being of communities of color, policymakers can ensure all Californians are valued and have the opportunity to be healthy and thrive.



This year, state leaders have the opportunity and resources to expand access to income-eligible undocumented adults **ages 26 to 49** — ending the unjust exclusion once and for all.



California Budget
& Policy Center

2014

Restricted-Scope Medi-Cal Expansion

The Affordable Care Act extends restricted-scope Medi-Cal to all eligible undocumented Californians regardless of previous requirements such as having dependent children or a qualifying disability. Undocumented immigrants remain largely excluded from accessing comprehensive health coverage.

2015

Medi-Cal Expanded to Children and Youth

Children and youth up to age 18, regardless of immigration status, are granted access to full-scope Medi-Cal in recognition that early access to health care is critical to growing up healthy.

2019

Medi-Cal Expanded to Young Adults

State policymakers extend comprehensive Medi-Cal coverage to eligible undocumented young adults ages 19 to 25. The initiative and implementation are modeled after the full-scope Medi-Cal expansion for all eligible children and youth.

2021

Medi-Cal Expanded to Older Adults

State policymakers expand full-scope Medi-Cal to adults age 50 and older, acknowledging that access to health care for this group is especially critical during the pandemic because older adults who are undocumented have a higher risk of severe illness and death due to COVID-19.

2022

Addressing the Remaining Gap of Ineligible Adults

This year, the governor's proposed 2022-23 budget closes this remaining eligibility gap by extending full-scope coverage to adults ages 26 to 49 no sooner than January 1, 2024. State leaders need to ensure this extension is codified and funded in this year's budget.

