SENATE BILL SB-21

Introduced by Senator Thomas Umberg (D-34)

An act relating to An act relating to Immigrant Family Enrollment Act ..

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB-21, Thomas Umberg (D-34). An act relating to Immigrant Family Enrollment Act ..

An act to amend the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to Medi-Cal, and making an appropriation therefor.

Vote: Majority. **Appropriations/fiscal:** yes. **Local program:** no.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

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SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all the following:

(a) California has extended eligibility for full-scope Medi-Cal benefits to residents of the state regardless of immigration status.

(b) Despite this expansion of eligibility, significant enrollment gaps persist among eligible immigrant families because of fear of engaging with government systems, language barriers, and a lack of awareness of available benefits, particularly in regions of the state with large immigrant populations, including Orange County.

(c) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this bill to ensure that the state's investment in expanded Medi-Cal eligibility translates into actual enrollment and access to care for eligible immigrant families through targeted, trusted, community-based outreach.

SECTION 2. The Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

(a) An individual who does not have satisfactory immigration status or is unable to establish satisfactory immigration status, as required by Section of the Welfare and Institutions Code, shall be eligible for the full scope of Medi-Cal benefits, if they are otherwise eligible for benefits under this chapter.

(b) An individual enrolled in Medi-Cal pursuant to parts of the Welfare and Institutions Code shall be enrolled in the full scope of Medi-Cal benefits, if otherwise eligible, and they shall not be

required to file a new application for Medi-Cal.

(i) The enrollment specified in subparagraph (A) shall be completed pursuant to an eligibility and enrollment plan ~~developed~~ *developed and annually updated* by the department in consultation with interested stakeholders, including, but not limited to, counties, health care service plans, health care providers, consumer advocates, and the Legislature.

(ii) Beginning July 1, 2027, the outreach strategies required by this subparagraph shall include, at a minimum, culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach conducted in partnership with federally qualified health centers and other community health centers, as defined in Section 1206 of the Health and Safety Code, located in counties in which eligible immigrant residents are enrolled in full-scope Medi-Cal at a rate below the statewide average. Outreach conducted pursuant to this clause shall include in-person application assistance, enrollment materials translated into the languages most spoken by the affected population, and community health worker or promotor-based outreach models.

SEC. 3.

The Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

(a) The State Department of Health Care Services shall allocate funding appropriated for purposes of this section to community health centers, as defined in Section of the Health and Safety Code, and to county health departments, to carry out the outreach activities required by clause (i) of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of the Section. The department shall prioritize allocation of funding under this section to counties with the largest gap between the number of individuals eligible for full-scope Medi-Cal benefits under the Section and the number of those individuals enrolled in the program.

(b) The department shall report to the Legislature, in compliance with Section of the Government Code, by January 1, 2029, on enrollment outcomes attributable to funding allocated under this section, including the change in enrollment rates among eligible immigrant residents in counties that received funding.

(c) The State Department of Health Care Services is designated as the state agency responsible for implementation of this section.

SEC. 4. The sum of fifteen million dollars ($15,000,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the State Department of Health Care Services for the 2027–28 fiscal year for purposes of implementing this Section of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as added by this act.