

# WE CARE *for* CALIFORNIA

A coalition to promote health care access, quality and affordability for all Californians

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 11, 2015

## **Broad Coalition of Doctors, Nurses, Hospitals and Other Healthcare Leaders Launches \$10 Million Statewide Paid Media Campaign To Fully Fund Medi-Cal**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** – “We Care for California,” a broad coalition of doctors, nurses, hospitals, workers, and other healthcare leaders, launched a statewide paid media campaign today calling on the State of California to fully fund Medi-Cal to bring payments to providers in line with the rates paid by Medicare.

The eight-week campaign is the beginning of a sustained effort to help Californians and state leaders understand how the severe underfunding of Medi-Cal harms millions of children, seniors in nursing homes, pregnant women, and people with disabilities, all of whom have difficulty getting access to the healthcare they need.

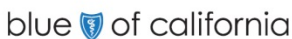
The campaign includes English and Spanish TV, radio, direct mail, outdoor billboards, and online calls to action. The TV ads are running in Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, and Sacramento. A selection of TV advertisements can be viewed on [Medi-CalMatters.org](http://Medi-CalMatters.org).

More than half of California children rely on Medi-Cal for basic healthcare, as do two-thirds of the state’s nursing home patients. But today, Medi-Cal is critically underfunded, preventing millions from getting quality healthcare or even getting an appointment with a health provider.

“As Californians, we have a moral responsibility to ensure the most vulnerable among us have access to basic medical services,” said Dr. Noha Abeolata, M.D., a family practitioner and CEO of Roots Community Clinic in Oakland, who is featured in the TV advertisements. “Fully funding Medi-Cal must be a priority in Sacramento. California families are depending on us.”

The coalition is seeking passage of two bills, SB 243 and AB 366, which would fully fund Medi-Cal, and want Gov. Jerry Brown to make significant movement toward fully funding Medi-Cal in his May revised budget.

-more-



With the chronic underfunding of Medi-Cal, California ranks 48th in the nation in payments to health providers. As a result, 56 percent of Medi-Cal patients report difficulty finding a doctor, and the severe under-funding costs the state’s hospitals more than \$6 billion annually.

Fully funding Medi-Cal would mean:

- Providing children with access to basic healthcare to help them grow up healthy and do better in school and life.
- Timely treatment for more people in doctors’ offices and clinics, rather than in more costly emergency rooms. This will decrease ER overcrowding and long wait times for people with more critical health emergencies.
- Investing in preventative medicine to keep people healthy and save money by reducing serious illnesses in the future.

“When my son Xavier was suffering from potentially life-threatening allergies, it took more than two months just to see a specialist through Medi-Cal,” said Emily Avila, a Medi-Cal patient from Cathedral City in Riverside County, who also is featured in the TV ads. “No child should have to wait months just for basic healthcare, and we have the power to change this and save lives of California children.”

**Note:** We Care for California can put journalists in touch with people featured in the TV spots and Medi-Cal patients in many areas of the state who have difficulty getting access to primary and specialty care.

**Contact:** Sean Wherley, SEIU-UHW, (323) 893-6831, [swherley@seiu-uhw.org](mailto:swherley@seiu-uhw.org)  
Jan Emerson-Shea, CHA, (916) 804-0663, [jemerson-shea@calhospital.org](mailto:jemerson-shea@calhospital.org)  
Molly Weedn, CMA, (415) 209-4217, [mweedn@cmanet.org](mailto:mweedn@cmanet.org)

\* \* \* \* \*

*The We Care for California coalition supports the goal that California should be the nation's health care leader in access, quality and affordability. The coalition includes: California Primary Care Association, Anthem Blue Cross, Blue Shield of California, California Association of Physician Groups, California Dental Association, California Hospital Association, California Medical Association, Dignity Health, Health Net, Kaiser Permanente, Molina Healthcare, and Service Employees International Union – United Healthcare Workers West.*