

CHA Key Messages

Medi-Cal: The Health Care Safety Net for Millions of Californians

- 1. Medi-Cal provides health coverage for 1 in 3 Californians, or over 13 million people, many of whom face major health risks.**
 - More than 40% of children, 50% of disabled people, and 1 million seniors in California get health care services thanks to Medi-Cal.
 - Medi-Cal partners with 400 hospitals, 1,500 community health clinics, and more than 100,000 professionals to coordinate and improve care for all.
 - For 17 counties — including most rural counties — Medi-Cal enrollment tops 40% of the county's population. The providers within these counties rely greatly on Medi-Cal reimbursement and frequently are called upon to step up to provide local resources to serve as the non-federal share of Medi-Cal payments.
- 2. Medi-Cal is efficient despite reimbursement rates that fall well short of the cost of care.**
 - Because Medi-Cal reimburses only 80 cents of every dollar spent on care, the program does not cover the total cost of caring for patients.
 - Despite California having the country's third highest cost of living, Medi-Cal per capita spending in California is comparable to that of Arkansas, West Virginia, and Oregon, reflecting an efficient, effective state-run program. The Medi-Cal program was an early adopter of value-based purchasing through its commitment to managed care, which has led to hospitals and health systems delivering high-quality care at a lower cost.
- 3. When Medi-Cal is underfunded, working Californians foot the bill.**
 - To maintain access to the high quality of care that all Californians deserve, the state must protect Medi-Cal funding and reject cuts in rates paid to doctors, hospitals, and others who care for Medi-Cal enrollees.
 - From September 2019 to September 2020, California shed [1.5 million jobs](#) related to the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, a growing number of Californians are losing their jobs and employer-sponsored insurance and relying upon the Medi-Cal program — eligibility for the program increased 3.1% during the first half of 2020.
 - To make up for the shortfall caused by Medi-Cal underfunding, Californians with employer-sponsored insurance end up paying more through higher premiums. This creates an additional burden on workers.
 - In 2020, California took important steps to broaden health care for undocumented immigrants and, as of Jan. 1, 2020, Medi-Cal was expanded to include undocumented young adults up to age 26. The state expected to enroll about 90,000 young adults in

the first year, securing a vital protection and moving California closer to universal coverage.