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Kristin B. Connelly

August 17, 2015

Supervisor John Gioia  
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors  
11780 San Pablo  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Dear Supervisor Gioia:

On behalf of the East Bay Leadership Council, I am writing to urge your support for expanded healthcare resources in the upcoming budget to support the implementation of a health coverage program for residents regardless of their immigration status – Contra Costa CARES.

The East Bay Leadership Council is a private sector, public policy organization that advocates on issues affecting economic vitality and quality of life. Our membership includes leaders from business, industry, education, local government, labor and the nonprofit community.

Despite the enormous contributions of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) in expanding access to health coverage, there remains a significant population of Contra Costa County residents who still lack access to care and remain uninsured. According to the UC Berkeley Labor Center, an estimated 19,000 individuals will be explicitly ineligible for health coverage due to their immigration status.

People without health care coverage generally wait to seek care until they are seriously ill. In many cases, health problems that could have been avoided with preventative care or treated early for little cost become significant and costly health issues. The impacts of this include increased demand on emergency services and increased costs to our healthcare system. This is not an efficient way of delivering care and creates an unnecessary burden that can be solved by expanding access to healthcare.

The Access to Care Stakeholder Group, made up of public and private health system stakeholders, has been tasked with identifying strategies to support healthcare access for the remaining uninsured. The group has developed a plan for a program – Contra Costa CARES - to meet the health needs of the remaining uninsured. We understand that the current proposal is to fund a one year pilot program, and that future funding will be dependent on the outcome of the 1115 Waiver request. We also encourage the County to carefully analyze the outcomes of the pilot program and take this analysis into account as it considers funding for future years.

Contra Costa County has the opportunity to join other California counties in implementing a model of health coverage for the remaining uninsured and finishing the job the ACA started. Let's build a healthier, stronger, and more prosperous Contra Costa County by ensuring access to healthcare for all.

We urge you to support the expansion of health care services for the remaining uninsured regardless of immigration status in the forthcoming county budget.

Thank you,

Kristin Connelly  
President & CEO