



**U**nited **L**atino **V**oices

December 3rd, 2021

Supervisor Diane Burgis, Chair  
Supervisor Candace Anderson  
Supervisor John Gioia  
Supervisor Federal Glover  
Supervisor Karen Mitchoff

Dear Board of Supervisors:

On behalf of #OneContraCosta Coalition, United Latino Voices, and Contra Costa Immigrants Rights Alliance, we want to thank the Board for its support and appointment of the Measure X Community Advisory Board. Our Coalition believes that the Advisory Board's recommendations are representative of the needs of the community and reflect their desire for positive change. We look forward to the Board approving allocations that will advance this approach.

As a first step, the Board approved moving the \$750,000 allocation for expansion of Contra Costa CARES to July 2022 (from July 2023).

However, we are requesting that the Board's Finance Committee set aside a minimum of \$5 million from the first year's allocation of Measure X funds to expand the CARES program. The current funding allocation will not be enough to include comprehensive care, which is urgently needed by this population. CARES-eligible residents provide valuable contributions to the economy of our county, and many immigrants serve as essential workers in a wide range of vital businesses, including the service and food production industries, while only having restricted access to MediCal services.

### **Actions for Funding**

We are writing to ask that you take action immediately to enact the following:

- 1. Allocate a minimum of \$5 million to expand current Contra Costa CARES capacity by the Spring of 2022 to serve an estimated 11,467 undocumented adults (27-49) who will remain uninsured.**
- 2. Allocate an additional \$500,000 of that increased allocation to fund trusted community organizations to conduct outreach, promotion, and education at the grassroots level as trusted and knowledgeable leaders.**
- 3. Once the CCHS CARES Planning Group has completed its work, we suggest that the Board should allow financial flexibility for the provision of comprehensive care for the CC CARES population. It is anticipated that the costs would be shared between the Community Health Centers, CCHS and possibly the Hospital Council.**

### **Increasing Minimum Amount of Funds to Expand CURRENT CARES Program**

The CAO's estimated cost of \$750,000 annually is only half of the \$1.5 million total cost for the current program that serves 4,100 patients. In order to expand the program to all 11,467 residents who will remain uninsured in the spring of 2022, a minimum of \$5 million is needed to provide primary care.

### **Integrating Additional Funds for Outreach and Promotion Efforts**

In addition to ensuring a minimum of \$5 million dedicated towards the expansion of the current CARES program, it is vital to include more funds that would support community-based organizations (CBOs) in their outreach, promotion, and education efforts for enrolling new members of CARES. Supporting the existing network of well-trusted CBOs is essential in assuring that undocumented adults seeking and navigating healthcare services will be assisted in a smooth, easy, and efficient manner. CBOs are the guides helping residents handle the hurdles of navigating systems such as issues with accessibility, translation, mistrust, and fear.

**Why invest in the health and well-being of Undocumented adults through securing comprehensive care?** For your own reference, below we have listed important findings related to costs and benefits that are associated with health reform:

#### **Potential Issues/Social Costs with Lack of Healthcare Expansion for Community and County:**

- According to an issue brief by the California Budget & Policy Center, by not providing comprehensive coverage to undocumented adults, these exclusionary policies place these (already-marginalized and disproportionately impacted) communities at a higher risk of developing UNDIAGNOSED health conditions, including those that could build up to life-threatening complications from COVID-19.
- We need to be aware of the repercussions of lack of coordinated care in relation to the costs of the social determinants of health, such as higher rates of individuals and families who are unsheltered, untreated behavioural health conditions, and health issues that reduce their ability to work and sustain employment.
- According to research reported by the Public Policy Institute, if undocumented immigrants continue to live without any coverage, greater health needs might arise as they grow older.
- According to an issue brief by the California Budget & Policy Center, underlying health conditions can exacerbate the detrimental health impacts of other diseases. The brief also described how when these individuals seek treatment, it is often by emergency medical services or patchwork of community-provided health services, and at this point they usually have experienced advanced diseases and conditions that are harder to actually treat.

#### **Potential Financial and Societal Benefits of Health Reform for Community and County:**

Robust health coverage is essential to the health and economic well being of both the undocumented community and Contra Costa County at large.

- Cost Benefit Analysis: When insured people have access to preventative services, they are less likely to seek expensive emergency care hospital services, which can cost the county \$5,000 or more per patient, depending on the health issue. If a patient goes to a Community Clinic, they

are much less likely to go to the hospital and the cost for service for the County is vastly reduced. In relation to this, this can also improve quality care and capacity of hospitals. This issue of primary care and ancillary services vs. emergency room services is not new for this Board. Access to comprehensive care and health insurance results in reduced preventable hospital admissions and lower death rates.

- According to a report from the UC Berkeley Labor Center, research has shown the value of health insurance on health, access to care, financial security and worker productivity.

**Action Steps Moving Forward**

In alignment with our county’s resolution that systemic racism is a public health issue, it is necessary to take the following steps in order to achieve health equity and better the overall quality of life for all constituents of our county and society, especially amidst the struggles of the current pandemic. It is essential to ensure the continuity of care where people will have personal security knowing they are able to seek care related to COVID and general wellness. We urgently request the Finance Committee at its meeting on Monday, December 6, 2021 to review and consider our actions for funding listed above.

Also, as we move forward, it is important to address the long term role of MXCAB considering how multi-year funding runs. It is vital for the MXCAB and Finance Committee to continue to engage in directly collaborating with the community to hear their voice.

Thank you for considering our remarks.

On behalf of the One Contra Costa Alliance:

Organization	Position(s), Name(s)	Logo
Contra Costa Immigrants Rights Alliance (CCIRA)	Coalition Manager, Kimberly Galindo	
ACCE Institute	Director, David Sharples	
#OneContraCostaCoalition	Executive Director, Roxanne Carrillo-Garza	
United Latino Voices (ULV) of Contra Costa County	Executive Leadership Team Doreen Moreno	
Health Access California	Organizer, Phoebe Abramowitz	