

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



March 8, 2021

## State Issues

Committee  
Hearings  
Scheduled

This week has been marked by policy committees beginning the work of hearing and moving policy bills through the process, a new Senator being sworn in (Senator Sydney Kamlager), and a State of the State address by Governor Newsom that focused on the brighter days ahead, but had many focusing on the recall effort.

Policy bills are being set for hearing, and to get an early start to avoid running into legislative deadlines, it looks like priority is being given to bills that are double referred (must be voted on in two policy committees due to subject matter). Also of note is the Legislative Spring recess in just two weeks (March 25 – April 4) and we should expect policy hearings to continue through April 30 – the deadline for bills to move from policy committee to fiscal committee.

A priority bill for the Catholic health care ministry is **SB 379 (Weiner): UC Health contracts with health facilities**. The bill is set to be heard in Senate Education Committee on Wednesday, March 17 and is double referred to Senate Health, where it likely will be heard in the next few weeks if it is voted out of Senate Education. This bill would preclude the UC Health System from contracting with any health care provider that follows “non-clinical policy-based restrictions” on care. This bill is seeking to keep UC Health from contracting with faith-based health care providers. We have taken an oppose position on the bill and are focusing our advocacy on the tremendous negative impact this bill would have on access to health care throughout the state. Alliance-member Dignity Health and UC Health are the #1 and #2 (respectively) Medi-Cal providers in the State, and agreements between these two systems and all of the other Alliance Member health care systems, improve access to timely care for the State’s vulnerable populations, alleviate capacity challenges, and conserve scarce financial resources. Among other issues, our discussion with Education Committee members has included our concern that this bill will put at risk residency placements from UC schools into Catholic hospitals, eroding education opportunities for physicians in training.

**SB 380 (Eggman)**, a bill that would make changes to the **End of Life Option Act (EOLOA)** is set to be heard in Senate Health Committee on March 24 and is double referred to Senate Judiciary should it pass Senate Health. Among other things, this bill eliminates January 1, 2026 sunset (extends the Act indefinitely), eliminates many of the “safeguards,” and begins to weaken conscience protections for providers and health

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(continued)

facilities: removes 15 day waiting period and final attestation, allows the consulting mental health professional to include LCSW or a professional state licensed counselor, redefines activities that are considered “participation,” and requires that a patient be informed of the EOLOA and referred to a participating provider. The Alliance once again will be an active participant in a coalition opposing physician assisted suicide and SB 380.

Another bill that has been introduced, but not yet scheduled is **AB 650 (Muratsuchi)** that will soon be amended to mandate health care provider hazard pay bonuses. The bill will be called the Health Care Worker Recognition and Retention Act. It is the author’s intent to require all health care providers to offer bonuses to all non-executive health care workers who worked during the COVID 19 pandemic. The bonuses will be \$10,000 for full time employees, \$6,000 for part time employees, and \$4,000 for less than part time employees. It is important to note we have not seen actual bill language yet, but it appears the bill will apply to employees working in hospitals, clinics, physician practices, and dialysis clinics. The informational materials state that the bill will exclude public hospital and other public health care providers and health care providers with fewer than 100 employees.

It should be noted that **Assembly Health** has not yet scheduled hearings for policy bills. The Committee is still focused on informational hearings. One such hearing last week was on Health Information Exchanges. Next week, they will co-host a hearing with the Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1 regarding the Governor’s CalAIM proposal: **Medi-Cal Eligibility, Benefits and Managed Care Components of California Advancing and Improving Medi-Cal**. The hearing is Tuesday, March 16 at 1:30pm. You can access the agenda [here](#) and background materials [here](#). The hearing will focus on details regarding “in lieu of services,” enhanced care management requirement, Medi-Cal Managed Care plan incentive payments and population health management programs, among other topics. The Committee has indicated an interest and need to have another hearing covering these issues at a later date – as there is so much to cover in this expansive reform to the State’s Medicaid program.

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