

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Week of February 21, 2022

## State Issues

<p>New Bill Introductions</p>	<p>Last Friday was the bill introduction deadline. More than 2000 bills have been introduced this year. We are still reviewing what was introduced late in the week, and spot bills are still awaiting amendments to reveal their intents. Included below are a few of the bills to highlight.</p> <p><b>AB 1878 (Wood) and SB 944 (Pan): California Health Benefit Exchange – Affordability Assistance.</b> As part of the strategy to get everyone health insurance coverage, there is a commitment to try to make individual plans more affordable through Covered California. The bill would implement reductions in cost sharing, including copays and coinsurance, and out of pocket maximums. It also would eliminate deductibles for all benefits.</p> <p><b>SB 1019 (Gonzalez): Medi-Cal managed Care plans.</b> The bill would require health plans to outreach to enrollees once a year to educate them on the mental health benefits covered by their plan and ensure primary care physicians are aware of those benefits.</p> <p><b>SB 1339 (Pan): Hospitals.</b> This is a spot bill that will be amended to address hospital seismic issues. Dr. Pan hopes his bill will bring the hospitals and the unions to the table to find a resolution to this ongoing issue.</p> <p><b>SB 964 (Wiener): Behavioral Health.</b> This bill includes several paths to improve the behavioral health workforce, including requiring the Board of Behavioral Science to study and provide recommendations to the Legislature regarding behavioral health workforce changes needed, including those related to scope of practice, license requirements, and clinical training requirements. The bill requires California community colleges and the UC System to develop accelerated behavioral health training programs. It would also create the Behavioral Health Workforce Preservation and Restoration Fund in the state Treasury to provide various financial incentives to those working in the behavioral health field.</p>
<p>Health Care Access and Affordability</p>	<p>The Legislative Analyst Office released a brief focusing on the Governor’s proposals related to Health Care Access and Affordability. You can access it via this link: <a href="http://budgettrack.blob.core.windows.net/btdocs2021/553.pdf">http://budgettrack.blob.core.windows.net/btdocs2021/553.pdf</a></p> <p>The report covers proposals related to expanding Medi-Cal to the remaining income eligible, undocumented residents; eliminating premiums from Medi-Cal; the Office of Health Care Affordability; reducing insulin costs; and affordability in Covered California plans.</p>
<p>Newly-Elected Assembly Member</p>	<p>Democrat Mike Fong has declared victory in the special primary election for the 49th Assembly District seat left vacant when Ed Chau (D-Monterey Park) was appointed an L.A. County Superior Court judge.</p>

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<p>Newly-Elected Assembly Member <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Fong is a trustee on the board of America's largest community college district, focusing on student access to higher education and expanding workforce training. He served as Director of Policy and Government Relations for the City of Los Angeles Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. He previously served as the East Area Director for Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.</p> <p>His community service included having served as a member of the White Memorial Medical Center Community Leadership Council, chair of the PBS Southern California Asian Pacific Islander Community Council, chair of the California Democratic Party Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, and as president of the Asian Pacific Alumni of UCLA.</p> <p>Fong and his challenger in the race, Republican Burton Brink, said during their campaigns that they both plan to run in the June primary and November general election for the same seat under the newly drawn district boundaries. The winner of that election would hold the seat until late 2024.</p>
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