March 2026

Senate Committee on Health
1021 O Street, R oom 3310
Sacramento, CA 95814

Building on 2025 victories to continue addressing health care affordability concerns

Dear Senate Health Committee Members,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations serving California patients, we express our appreciation for this Committee's work last year. From passing comprehensive legislation to hold pharmacy benefit managers accountable for their role in driving up health care costs and pushing community pharmacies to the brink to debating access barriers like prior authorization and step therapy, this Committee effectively centered patient concerns and needs while addressing long-standing affordability and access issues.

As we dive into the second year of a 2-year legislative session, we are writing to share our collective policy priorities and offer ourselves as resources for you and your staff.

- Holding PBMs Accountable – Ensure the effective implementation of SB 41 (Wiener, 2025) to help reduce patient out-of-pocket costs and protect community pharmacies throughout the state, particularly in rural and underserved regions. It's past time these massive corporations and their health insurer parent companies are held accountable for rising costs.
    - Since the passage of SB 41, we have heard from many pharmacies that PBMs have increased audits, reduced reimbursement even more than last year, and continue to force patients into PBM-owned pharmacies.

- Access Barriers – Step therapy, prior authorization, and other access barriers routinely deny or delay essential, evidence-based treatments. We are concerned with health insurers' reliance on new AI, particularly algorithms that often deny care without meaningful clinical review, and must build on the progress made by SB 306 (Becker, 2025). Without stronger patient appeal protections and enhanced transparency, health insurers will continue shifting costs onto patients.
- Office of Health Care Affordability – Promote the newly established *Patient and Consumer Forum on Health Care Affordability* to ensure cost-based decisions proposed by OHCA don't come at the expense of research, innovation, and patient access.
- Patient-centered Policy Reforms – Overall, we will monitor *any* proposal that aims to alter how state and federal health care programs serve vulnerable Californians, particularly those who live with rare and chronic diseases and/or reside in underserved regions. If state and federal health care programs are debated in your committee this year, please ensure there are meaningful transparency and oversight provisions. At the end of the day, patients must always directly benefit.

This Committee plays a central role in shaping the State's health care agenda. Those we serve are still struggling with high deductibles, rising health care premiums, and unnecessary denials and delays for proven, evidence-based treatments. Please remember to keep California patients in mind as you debate complex policy issues in the coming months.

Sincerely,

ALS Association
Alzheimer's San Diego
AMAAD Institute
Applied Pharmacy Solutions
Axis Advocates
Bleeding Disorders Council of California
BREATHE Southern California
California Access Coalition
California Chronic Care Coalition
California Hepatitis C Task Force
California Lupus Foundation
California Pharmacists Association
California Rare Disease Access Coalition
Carrie's TOUCH
Christie's Place
Community Health Action Network
Connecting to Cure Crohn's and Colitis
Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute
Embracing Latina Leadership AllianceS (ELLAS)
Gaucher Community Alliance
International Bipolar Foundation
Latino Diabetes Association
Let's Kick ASS Palm Springs
Liver Coalition of California
Liver Health Foundation
Looms for Lupus
Lupus LA
Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
Neuropathy Action Foundation

Patient Advocates United in San Diego County
Sickle Cell Disease Foundation
The Association of Hidradenitis Suppurativa and Inflammatory Diseases (AHSID)
The G.R.E.E.N. Foundation
The Latino Cancer Institute
The Sidewalk Project
The Wall Las Memorias

CC: Members, Senate Committee on Health
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