



April 2, 2019

The Honorable Jim Wood  
 Chair, Assembly Health Committee  
 State Capitol, Room 6005  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support for AB 526 (Petrie-Norris) – WIC to Medi-Cal Express Lane Enrollment**

Dear Assemblymember Wood:

The undersigned organizations write in support of AB 526 (Petrie Norris), which would authorize the implementation and funding of express enrollment pathway in Medi-Cal from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), in order to facilitate health coverage enrollment for vulnerable children and pregnant women who are eligible for Medi-Cal. Enrolling pregnant women, infants and young children as soon as possible will offer them the prenatal care and vital well-child care that they need to ensure healthy pregnancies and healthy early childhood development.

WIC is a federally funded health and nutrition program for pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children under age 5 to improve birth and health outcomes.

There are eligibility requirements, which include incomes under 185% FPL, state residency, and determined “nutritional risk.” WIC participants are eligible regardless of their immigration status. Average monthly WIC enrollment is 1.1 million, which includes 602,000 children and 234,000 infants. The WIC eligibility system currently checks participants’ Medi-Cal enrollment by linking to Medi-Cal’s enrollment system (MEDS). WIC reports that over 90,000 WIC children and 13,000 WIC pregnant women are not enrolled in Medi-Cal, despite being eligible for Medi-Cal.

There are about 240,000 remaining uninsured children, half of whom are already eligible for Medi-Cal but not enrolled. Fulfilling the promise of coverage for all California children requires smart strategies for maximizing enrollment. For example, going to where large numbers of eligible but not enrolled children are, such as support programs with similar eligibility criteria as Medi-Cal—like WIC-- and creating expedited enrollment pathways—like Express Lane Eligibility (ELE)--using eligibility information already collected by WIC.

AB 526 would establish an expedited pathway for Medi-Cal enrollment based on existing eligibility information already obtained through WIC. It would authorize the implementation and funding of an express enrollment pathway in Medi-Cal from WIC, in order to facilitate Medi-Cal enrollment for vulnerable children and pregnant women.

Sincerely,

Children’s Specialty Care Coalition  
Orange County United Way  
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network  
National Health Law Program  
Work  
California Food Policy Advocates  
California WIC Association  
CaliforniaHealth+ Advocates  
Angeles  
Alliance of Californians for Community  
Empowerment Action  
California LGBTQ Health and Human  
Services Network  
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation

Public Law Center  
Western Center on Law & Poverty  
California Physicians Alliance  
USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social  
California School-Based Health Alliance  
California Children’s Hospital Association  
National Council of Jewish Women Los  
Maternal and Child Health Access  
California Physicians Alliance  
American Academy of Pediatrics-CA  
National Association of Social Workers-CA  
Health Access

Cc: Members of Assembly Health Committee  
Assemblymember Petrie-Norris