



Lessons from California

EXPANDING FULL-SCOPE MEDI-CAL TO ALL CHILDREN

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THE ISSUE:

Even with robust a Medi-Cal program for children, almost **5% of California's children remained uninsured**. In September 2015, **California passed a law** to extend full-scope Medi-Cal to all children under the age of 19 whose family income is under 266% of the federal poverty level. According to some estimates, 170,000 undocumented children would be eligible under SB 75 — **approximately 120,000** were in restricted-scope (also known as “emergency”) Medi-Cal and another 50,000 children were eligible but not enrolled. The challenge then remained how to increase outreach and education to encourage participation in the expanded benefits.

STRATEGY AND ACTIONS:

NHeLP and several partner organizations worked closely with the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and community-based organizations on three key areas of SB 75 implementation: language access, communication to eligible children, and public outreach and education. Although DHCS had committed to translating many of its communications to eligible children, NHeLP and eight partner organizations **successfully lobbied** to have the **initial letter** to children translated into all of the **Medi-Cal threshold languages**. Second, NHeLP and several other key stakeholders met bi-weekly with DHCS in an **immigration workgroup** to discuss SB 75 policies, implementation, and communication to beneficiaries. Together, the workgroup developed **informational letters** and **FAQs** designed to explain to eligible families the process and benefits of acquiring full-scope Medi-Cal. Finally, NHeLP and many partner organizations created a **toolkit for community advocates** to better understand **key facts**, **how to apply**, **how to select a managed care plan**, and more. Over 500 people participated in the advocacy **webinar** that focused on eligibility, enrollment, and outreach. We also held a **virtual townhall** to address some of the many questions community members raised. NHeLP also participated in user testing the SB 75 eligibility logic programmed into the state eligibility computer system, **CalHEERS**, to ensure that immigration status for children under 19 was not a barrier to full-scope Medi-Cal eligibility determinations. On May 16, **DHCS successfully launched SB 75** implementation (with retroactive eligibility to May 1) and started **the transition** of children from restricted scope to full-scope Medi-Cal. Advocates from other states should consider this successful effort to expand health coverage for all children who remain uninsured, regardless of their immigration status.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Health4AllKids website](#)

[Materials for Community Outreach](#)

[Best Practices for Working with Immigrant Families](#)

[DHCS SB 75 Website](#)

[WCLP Practice Tip](#)