



April 11, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
 Speaker  
 United States House of Representatives  
 568 Cannon House Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune Majority  
 Leader  
 United States Senate  
 511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
 Chairman  
 House Energy & Commerce Committee  
 2161 Rayburn House Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Crapo  
 Chairman  
 Senate Finance Committee  
 239 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jason Smith  
 Chairman  
 House Ways & Means Committee  
 1011 Longworth House Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Urgent Need to Protect Medicaid Funding for the Central Coast of California**

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Chairman Crapo, Chairman Guthrie, and Chairman Smith,

On behalf of health care leaders committed to serving Medicaid beneficiaries in the San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara County, we write to express our strong opposition to legislation that would result in significant cuts to Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California). These cuts would jeopardize access to vital health care for our most vulnerable populations and destabilize the economy in our region.

As Congress debates potential reductions to Medicaid funding, we urge policymakers to protect the safety net program. This program provides coverage to 15 million Californians—including over 242,000 people or 33% of the total population in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties in California. These two counties span nearly 6,035 square miles, and consist of 15 incorporated cities, with many rural areas and socioeconomic challenges. Santa Barbara County now ranks second highest in California for its poverty rate.

From the perspective of hospitals, providers, community clinics and health plans, we know firsthand that Medicaid funding reductions will lead to decreased access to care, exacerbating existing provider shortages and worsening health disparities in our region. The Central Coast region already faces significant challenges, including limited access to primary and specialty care and is in federally designated medically underserved areas. We see every day how Medicaid is an essential lifeline for children, families, seniors, pregnant women, and individuals with disabilities. Any cuts to its funding would have devastating consequences, not only for those who rely on it but for the entire health care system and local economy.

Reduced federal funding would also put additional strain on hospitals and health systems. Hospitals in our region serve a disproportionately high number of Medicaid patients and are among the largest employers in their communities. Funding cuts could force them to reduce services, eliminate critical programs—such as maternal and child health services, 24/7 emergency care and mental health support—or even lay off staff. Some facilities may even need to close, forcing thousands of people to travel hundreds of miles to access critical care.

The undersigned organizations play a vital role in the economic stability of our communities, supporting local businesses, sustaining employment and generating tax revenue. Medicaid also helps individual businesses. In fact, more than half of non-disabled Medicaid enrollees are working in low-wage jobs. Receiving health coverage through Medicaid allows members to focus on supporting their family, maintaining a job, and boosting the local economy through workforce stability. Preserving Medicaid funding is not just a health care priority—it is an economic necessity.

The proposed Medicaid cuts discussed are not simple budgetary adjustments; they represent a fundamental shift in how we prioritize health care for low-income Americans. As Congress considers budget reconciliation measures that could lead to substantial reductions in Medicaid funding, we urge you to maintain current funding levels to protect the health and well-being of millions of Californians.

While we strongly oppose any Medicaid cuts, we also stand ready to collaborate on meaningful health care reforms. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 90% of health care costs stem from chronic disease and mental health conditions. Rather than reducing critical Medicaid funding, we encourage a focus on addressing cost drivers and improving efficiency within the health care system.

We respectfully urge Congress to protect Medicaid and work with us to uphold our shared commitment to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of economic status, have access to the care they need to live healthy, productive lives.

Thank you for your concern for this important issue and support for a shared vision of optimal care for the Central Coast through the Medicaid program. If you would like any more information, please feel free to reach out to me, CenCal Health CEO Marina Owen at (805) 685-9525, ext. 1013 or by email at [mowen@cencalhealth.org](mailto:mowen@cencalhealth.org).

Sincerely,

Signed by:




**Lauren Ramos**

Program Director

CAPSLO Homeless Services

Signed by:



**Marina Owen**

Chief Executive Officer

CenCal Health

Signed by:



**Serena Todd,**

**LMFT**

Clinical Social Worker

People's Self-

Help Housing

DocuSigned by:



**Lisa Fraser**

Executive Director

Center for Family

Strengthening

Signed by:



**Erica Rivalcaba Heredia**

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Corazón Latino

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**Ashley Costa**

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**Mahdi Ashrafian, MD**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Santa Barbara  
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County Administrative Officer  
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**Serena Todd, LMFT**

Clinical Social Worker  
People's Self-Help Housing

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*Sophia Sosa*

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**Sophia Sosa**

Deputy Chief Executive  
Officer  
Community Health  
Centers

Signed by:

*Laura Capps*

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**Laura Capps**

2nd District Supervisor, Chair  
Santa Barbara County

cc: San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties Congressional Delegation  
Senate Finance Committee Staff and Consultants  
House Energy & Commerce Committee Staff and Consultants  
House Ways & Means Committee Staff and Consultant  
**Congressman Salud Carbajal**