

Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

AGING IS SOMETHING WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON

June 22, 2021

The Honorable Richard Pan
Chair, Senate Health Committee
State Capitol, Room 2191
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB 470 (Carrillo)

Dear Senator Pan,

I am writing on behalf of the Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County and our 40 member organizations to express our support for AB 470 (Carrillo), which will eliminate the asset limit for Medi-Cal programs serving seniors and persons with disabilities.

This groundbreaking bill will increase access to Medi-Cal and health care services for many people who are most at risk of COVID-19 and terribly impacted by the economic and health consequences of the pandemic. It would allow them to maintain financial stability while ensuring access to affordable health care, which is critical in this time of pandemic. By eliminating the Medi-Cal asset test, AB 470 will end the disproportionate harm against people of color, who are more likely to have cash savings instead of exempt assets like a home.

Currently, a person who is 65 or older who is enrolled in Medi-Cal is restricted to having \$2,000 or less in savings. Other Medi-Cal beneficiaries (those under age 65) have no asset limit thanks to the Affordable Care Act. This is unfair. It puts seniors at risk of further instability or homelessness when financial crises happen, and prevents them from having adequate resources to weather a crisis – an eviction, a leaking roof, or a major vehicle repair. Our 40 coalition members – community-based organizations that provide social and health services to over 80,000 older people in our county – encounter seniors every day who have been destabilized by the loss of critically needed health coverage as a result of this unfair policy.

AB 470 completely eliminates the asset test for both initial Medi-Cal applications and for redeterminations. The elimination of the asset test in public programs reflects a shift away from requiring low-income people to deplete all their resources prior to receiving help. Extending this policy to older Californians aligns with this shift and creates parity between Medi-Cal programs.

We urge your support of this important legislation to provide equity and stability for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities who are subject to the asset test.

Sincerely,



Wendy Peterson
Director, Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County