

New Health Care Mandates Would Drive Up Premiums By Nearly \$634 Million, Jeopardizing Affordability



California Association of
Health Plans

California's health plans provide health care coverage for more than 28 million people and are dedicated to ensuring that everyone has access to high quality, affordable health care services. In 2026, California lawmakers are considering many new health care mandate bills that, as proposed, would altogether drive up premiums by nearly \$634 million. This push by the legislature for new, expensive health care mandates comes at a time when California is trying to improve health care affordability.

As legislators continue to mandate more and more services, premiums go up for everyone, whether they use those services or not. The following proposed bills were analyzed by the non-partisan California Health Benefits Review Program (CHBRP) at the University of California and altogether as introduced would raise premiums by nearly \$634 million, according to CHBRP:

SB 1199 (Weber Pierson)

Requires payments to drug manufacturers to count toward patient out-of-pocket maximums. Raises premiums by **\$355 million**.

AB 1887 (Zbur)

Pharma sponsored bill to remove prior authorization and step therapy requirements for high-cost drugs treating rare diseases. Raises premiums by **\$148 million**.

AB 1570 (Wilson)

Eliminates cost-sharing for supplemental screening and diagnostic breast imaging. Raises premiums by **\$93.9 million**.

SB 1309 (Rubio)

Eliminates cost-sharing for follow-up lung cancer screenings and diagnostics. Raises premiums by **\$27.6 million**.

AB 1682 (Hart)

Mandates coverage of scalp cooling treatments for chemotherapy patients. Increases premiums by **\$4 million**.

AB 1970 (Harabedian)

Prohibits step therapy for mental health and substance use disorder medications. Raises premiums by **\$2.4 million**.

AB 1906 (Aguiar-Curry)

Expands cervical cancer screening protocols. Increases premiums by **\$1.5 million**.

AB 1843 (Elhawary)

Eliminates prior authorization for hepatitis C treatments and mandates compliance with guidelines by the American Liver Foundation (pharma sponsored). Increases premiums by **\$708,000**.

SB 950 (Weber Pierson)

Requires coverage of FDA-approved costly Alzheimer's and dementia treatments without first trying other less expensive yet effective options (step therapy). Increases premiums by **\$660,000**.

Health Care Mandates Threaten Affordability Efforts Underway: The state is investing in long-term health care affordability through the Office of Health Care Affordability (OHCA), which is working with health plans and other stakeholders to implement spending targets and rein in spending growth. But these costly new health coverage mandates pending in the Legislature jeopardize affordability gains in California.

Meanwhile, the Department of Managed Health Care has already submitted California's expanded Essential Health Benefits (EHBs) package to the federal government. If approved, this package is projected to increase premiums by at least **\$500 million** annually.

Cumulatively, the costs of a new EHBs package and the proposed new benefit mandates would drive up premiums by \$1.1 billion.

California simply can't afford these higher health care costs. Vote no on all health care mandates.