

El Dorado Joins Rural Counties in Urging Legislature to Eliminate Medi-Cal Rate Cuts

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Special to the Tribune – Margaret Williams

El Dorado County joins the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California Hospital Association, and a broad-based coalition of Medi-Cal providers known as We Care for California in urging the Legislature and Administration to eliminate Assembly Bill 97 (2011) Medi-Cal rate cuts, and increase Medi-Cal payments to healthcare providers and health plans during the upcoming State Budget negotiations.

“Many El Dorado County medical providers have been impacted by these rate cuts, resulting in loss of, or limited access to, services,” said Don Ashton, Director of the El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency. “Elimination of the Medi-Cal rate cuts is critical to El Dorado County, and we urge the Legislature and Administration to take these impacts into consideration as they enter Budget negotiations.”

AB 97, a 2011-12 State Budget Trailer Bill, was passed by the Legislature and approved by Governor Brown in 2011. The measure cut rates to a variety of Medi-Cal providers by 10 percent off of the 2008 reimbursement rates. Payment reductions of this scale threaten the accessibility of services to individuals who reside in rural and already medically underserved areas.

On June 2, We Care for California sponsored a rally at the Capitol in which nearly 5,000 participants advocated on behalf of eliminating the 2011 Medi-Cal rate cuts. Medical professionals, Medi-Cal recipients, lawmakers, advocates, hospitals, and insurers all joined together at the largest health-related rally ever at the state Capitol with a single message to Budget negotiators and to the Governor – “Medi-Cal Matters.” Medi-Cal reimbursement rates directly impact the ability of providers and facilities to accept Medi-Cal patients, and thereby directly affect access to healthcare. The Legislature must pass a State Budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year by June 15, and send it to the Governor for his action. The 2015-16 State Budget will take effect July 1.