As part of a ten-year statewide initiative, The California Endowment is working in partnership with local communities to create places where children and youth are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. This Health Happens Here newsletter lifts up successful work underway in our Building Healthy Communities sites and throughout California, effective models that can influence and shape policy at the local, state, and national level.

Building Healthy Communities Sites
Working Toward #Health4All

Campaign aims to improve access to health care for all Californians, regardless of immigration status.

The Affordable Care Act, also known as “Obamacare,” is widely credited with reducing the ranks of the uninsured; more than 15 million Americans now have health coverage as a direct result of the law.

Unfortunately, Obamacare did little to help undocumented Californians get covered. Even undocumented Californians who have lived here and paid taxes for decades are barred from purchasing health coverage from Covered California, the state’s health insurance exchange.

The California Endowment launched its #Health4All campaign to find ways to fill these gaping holes in the safety net. The goal was “to improve access to health care for all Californians, regardless of immigration status,” says Virginia Mosqueda, a program director at The Endowment’s Santa Ana office.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 4
In a previous issue of The California Endowment’s Health Happens Here newsletter, I wrote that “California’s most valuable resource is our people.” To me and my colleagues at The California Endowment, that’s more than a slogan. It is a core value that guides our work every day.

We believe that for our state to thrive over the long term, all individuals need the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. Today’s young people can be our future job creators, political leaders, and cultural icons. But if we fail to provide them and their families with the fundamental building blocks of a healthy life, the waste of human talent will be epic.

This issue of Health Happens Here focuses on a group of residents frequently denied their fair share: undocumented Californians. Our state is home to nearly three million undocumented residents, mostly from Mexico and Central America. They came here in search of a better life for themselves and their children. Many have stayed for decades and raised families here—and all pay taxes.

Despite their contributions, undocumented Californians are systematically denied access to the resources they need to build a healthy life. Their communities are among the most polluted; their schools among the worst. And undocumented immigrants are prohibited by law from purchasing health insurance on Covered California and all Obamacare health insurance exchanges, even if they use their own money. That’s not only unfair to these taxpayers, it’s bad for all of us. Bay Area nurse Aiko Aspillaga explains why and shares her experience as an undocumented Californian in our interview feature on page seven.

The California Endowment’s #Health4All campaign is working to raise awareness about the gaps in California’s safety net and to advocate for changes to help all our people stay healthy. The movement is gaining momentum. On page six, you can read how a group of advocates changed the minds of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, convincing them to continue providing important health services to undocumented residents—a great victory for local residents.

President Obama’s recent executive orders on immigration are also important steps forward. By protecting some parents and children from the threat of deportation, they reduce a huge source of stress for families and encourage them to come out of the shadows and claim the benefits to which they are entitled. Though these executive orders are currently under court review, our Building Healthy Communities sites are helping undocumented Californians get ready, so they can act quickly when the new policies take effect.

I’m proud of our BHC sites for acting so strongly in solidarity with our undocumented neighbors and for everything they do to create opportunities for our people.
As part of #Health4All, The California Endowment’s Building Healthy Communities sites are working to raise awareness about immigrants’ contributions to California, advocate for policies that expand health coverage, and connect immigrants to health programs and organizations that provide care when they need it.

Building Healthy Communities sites are working closely with community organizations, public health leaders, and health care providers. However, its most recognizable advocate may be San Francisco Giants giant relief pitcher Sergio Romo, a son of immigrants who grew up in Imperial County, near the border with Mexico. “Over one million undocumented Californians cannot see a doctor,” Romo said in a video he made recently for The Endowment. “People are in pain, even dying, from preventable diseases.”

President Obama’s 2014 executive orders on immigration, DAPA (Deferred Action for Parental Accountability) and DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) provided a major boost. “Many eligible Californians didn’t sign up for the ACA originally, because they lived in mixed-status households” and worried that signing up might endanger their families if personal information were shared with immigration authorities, Mosqueda explains.

Jim Mangia, CEO of St. John’s Well Child and Family Center, a non-profit community health center located in South Los Angeles, agrees. “A big reason immigrants don’t get any health care is because they’re afraid,” says Mangia. “They’re living in the shadows. People are ignoring services they’re entitled to.”

To help bring immigrants out of the shadows, BHC sites focus on education, spreading the word about the importance and availability of health coverage, and partnering with groups that sign up and treat undocumented immigrants, including St. John’s.

Of the 75,000 or so patients St. John’s sees every year, about 20,000 are undocumented. “At St. John’s we believe that everyone deserves health care regardless of immigration status,” Mangia says. Another important partner is the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, which reaches into most parts of California’s Central Valley. The region was already intensely hot and dry even before the state’s drought began. “It was already at the boiling point even before that hit,” says Amparo Cid, an attorney who directs CRCAF’s Fresno office.

Cid says that DACA, which exempts some children from deportation, is especially important. “Maybe mom and dad no longer have access to work, but we can reach the children.”

A focus on prevention is important everywhere, but the needs are often greatest in the areas where immigrants live. In many communities in California’s agriculture heartland, for example, the tap water may not be safe to drink. And in both rural and urban areas, dangerous levels of air pollution are common and fresh, affordable foods can be difficult to find. These and other challenges make healthy living extremely difficult.

The larger mission is “building a culture of health,” says Mangia. “For diabetes patients, we have exercise classes, fitness classes, and courses on how to cook healthy food. We have over 500 diabetics in our practice.”

Cid of the CRCAF says she enjoys working with The Endowment to help immigrants and others take on these issues systemically and realize it’s about more than just an individual or their own families. “I really would like to see a community that is engaged, informed, empowered,” she says. “To know that what they do is meaningful, to make positive change in their neighborhoods.”

Tensions and difficulties aside, Cid says she can’t think of a more powerful way to use her legal training to exert real-world, day-to-day change. “We try to hold systems accountable—systems that sometimes forget the human beings,” she says. “In the end, it’s people. It’s families.”

To find out if you or a family member may be eligible for DAPA (Deferred Action for Parental Accountability) or DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) or for more information about DACA and DACA, please call the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials hotline at (855) 373-2631.

To learn if you are eligible for health coverage through Covered California, visit CoveredCA.com or call (800) 300-1506.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

#Health4All Searches for Statewide Solutions and Connects Immigrants to Resources

“Over one million undocumented Californians cannot see a doctor. People are in pain, even dying, from preventable diseases.”

– Sergio Romo, SF Giants

“A big reason immigrants don’t get any health care is because they’re afraid. They’re living in the shadows. People are ignoring services they’re entitled to.”

– Jim Mangia

that pledge, undocumented residents remained fearful. Still, “DACA and DAPA helped reduce that fear,” says Mosqueda.

DAPA and DACA have been temporarily blocked by a federal judge in Texas, but Mosqueda is not worried. “We’ve heard from all the legal scholars and advocates, and they don’t think it’s in danger. It will just take a year or so for it to work its way through the courts.” She urges immigrants to learn if they are eligible and to be ready to sign up as soon as the stay is lifted. Ensuring that DAPA, DACA, and the Affordable Care Act move forward is essential, but these experts argue that long term solutions must also focus on creating healthy communities. “It’s not just going to the doctor’s office,” says Cid. “It’s the social determinants of health, like quality education, healthy neighborhoods, jobs, and economic stability.

To learn more, please visit CoveredCA.com. Find more information about architecture and DAPA, please call Covered California hotline at (855) 353-2631.

– Artic

le by Scott Timberg

San Francisco Giants pitcher Sergio Romo takes a break with youth advocates at The California Endowment after filming a #Health4All public service announcement.
Advocates Advance #Health4All in BHC Counties

Advocates for #Health4All won a stunning victory in Fresno this spring, convincing a majority of the Board of Supervisors to reconnect undocumented immigrants to health coverage, reversing a decision made the previous year.

The story begins in 2014, when the board voted to bar the Medically Indigent Services Program from providing assistance to undocumented residents. Given the large number of immigrants and migrant laborers in the Central Valley, this was a serious blow.

Local advocates immediately mobilized.

The key turning point came when “the conversation shifted from dollars and illegals to people,” says Sandra F. Celedon-Castro, HUB Manager for Fresno Building Healthy Communities. “It was extremely important to put a face to the campaign. Over 1,000 Fresnans signed tongue depressors calling for health care access for all, which were delivered during a Board of Supervisors meeting.”

Advocates also helped organize prayer vigils, rallies, and community meetings. “Attendance at each event ranged from 50–250 people,” she says. In addition, more than 500 voters contacted their local representatives in support of #Health4AllFresnans.

The new $5.6 million program, which was approved in early April, differs from Medically Indigent Services Program in some important ways, and it will focus exclusively on short-term care, including specialty care, such as cancer treatment and gallstone surgery.

A similar struggle is taking place in Sacramento today. In 2009, during some of the recession’s darkest days, the county Board of Supervisors voted to stop funding many health services for undocumented immigrants. With the economy beginning to rebound, many public health and immigrant rights advocates are now seeking change.

At an overflowing meeting in March, advocates for #Health4All for all lobbied the Board to restore assistance. Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson was among those who spoke up for change, telling the Board, “We want to make sure that everyone has health care coverage. That is the Sacramento that we believe in.”

Jaime Soto, Sacramento’s Roman Catholic bishop, also urged the Board to expand health services for all, calling on members to respect the essential humanity of all residents. “God created his people,” Soto announced. “But we’ve created unpeople” including the poor, the unemployed, and the undocumented.

Will Sacramento follow Fresno’s lead? Stay tuned!

As this issue went to press, the Sacramento Board of Supervisors approved a $5 million #Health4All trial program to provide health coverage for many of the county’s undocumented residents!

BREAKING NEWS

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

Health Care Is a Right, Regardless of Immigration Status

An Interview with Akiko Aspillaga

Born in the Philippines, Akiko Aspillaga came to the United States to join her mother when she was only ten years old. As a high school student applying to college, she made a discovery that changed her life: Akiko was undocumented. Her immigration status nearly derailed her dream of becoming a nurse, but thanks to persistence, hard work, and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, she received her Registered Nurse’s credential this spring. We talked with Akiko about her experiences growing up in California, the importance of #Health4All, and her work with ASPIRE, a pan-Asian undocumented youth group mobilizing to protect the rights of immigrant families.
I Imagine a California that will be Recognized as a National Leader on Health Care

Yo Imagino un California Reconocido Como un Líder Nacional en el Cuidado Médico.

The California Endowment: It must have been quite a culture shock coming to the Bay Area from the Philippines as a ten-year-old? Tell us about that experience.

TCE: ¿Debía haber sido un gran choque cultural el venir a la Área de la Bahía de las Filipinas a los diez años?

Akiko Aspillaga: It was a little bit traumatic for me, to be honest. I was bullied when I was in elementary school. I was picked on because of what I was doing wrong, but the other kids thought it was really funny, and they would always taunt me. So for a long time, it was very difficult for me to speak in English, even though I knew the language. I didn’t want to talk.

Everyone, regardless of income and regardless of immigration status, should be able to receive health care. It is what’s just.

And with a healthier workforce, a healthier community, and healthier children, we would be a healthier California.

AA: Creo que es lo correcto. Todos, independiente de estado económico e independiente de su estado migratorio, deberían poder recibir cobertura médica. Es lo justo.

And a stronger health care system would open the door to new possibilities for our community. It would empower to us. ASPIRE is one of the few organizations that focuses on organizing undocumented Asians. We have been traditionally underrepresented in the debate. Many of our members thought, for much of our time, “maybe I’m the only undocumented Asian out there!” For them to find community and support has been a very positive experience.

AA: Es muy excitante y nos empodera. ASPIRE es una de las pocas organizaciones que se enfoca en organizar a personas indocumentadas de origen asiático. Hemos sido tradicionalmente infrarrepresentados en el debate. Muchos de nuestros miembros, por mucho tiempo, pensaban “tal vez soy el único asiático indocumentado?” Para ellos el encontrar una comunidad y apoyo ha sido una experiencia positiva.

The California Endowment: Indocumentados comprar seguro médico bajo el intercambio de salud Covered California?

AA: I think it’s only right. Everyone, regardless of income and regardless of immigration status, should be able to receive health care. It is what’s just. We live in a society where we are all leaning together in order to stand.

And a healthier community, and healthier children, we would be a healthier California.

AA: Creen que es lo correcto. Todos, independiente de estado económico e independiente de su estado migratorio, deberían poder recibir cobertura médica. Es lo justo.

And with a healthier workforce, a healthier community, and healthier children, we would be a healthier California.

AA: Creen que es lo correcto. Todos, independiente de estado económico e independiente de su estado migratorio, deberían poder recibir cobertura médica. Es lo justo.

And a stronger health care system would open the door to new possibilities for our community. It would empower to us. ASPIRE is one of the few organizations that focuses on organizing undocumented Asians. We have been traditionally underrepresented in the debate. Many of our members thought, for much of our time, “maybe I’m the only undocumented Asian out there!” For them to find community and support has been a very positive experience.

AA: Es muy excitante y nos empodera. ASPIRE es una de las pocas organizaciones que se enfoca en organizar a personas indocumentadas de origen asiático. Hemos sido tradicionalmente infrarrepresentados en el debate. Muchos de nuestros miembros, por mucho tiempo, pensaban “tal vez soy el único asiático indocumentado?” Para ellos el encontrar una comunidad y apoyo ha sido una experiencia positiva.

The California Endowment: I didn’t realize I was undocumented until I was applying for college. I was asked for that nine-digit number, and I wasn’t able to produce it. My status became especially important after I got into the nursing program at San Francisco State. They let me enter and stay in the program, but they told me that if I finished, I wouldn’t be able to take the nursing board exam. That is why DACA was so important to me. I was able to take the test, and now, I am a Registered Nurse.

And a stronger health care system would open the door to new possibilities for our community. It would empower to us. ASPIRE is one of the few organizations that focuses on organizing undocumented Asians. We have been traditionally underrepresented in the debate. Many of our members thought, for much of our time, “maybe I’m the only undocumented Asian out there!” For them to find community and support has been a very positive experience.

AA: Es muy excitante y nos empodera. ASPIRE es una de las pocas organizaciones que se enfoca en organizar a personas indocumentadas de origen asiático. Hemos sido tradicionalmente infrarrepresentados en el debate. Muchos de nuestros miembros, por mucho tiempo, pensaban “tal vez soy el único asiático indocumentado?” Para ellos el encontrar una comunidad y apoyo ha sido una experiencia positiva.
El cuidado de salud es un derecho independiente del estado migratorio
una entrevista con Akiko Aspillaga

Nacida en las Filipinas, Akiko Aspillaga vino a los Estados Unidos para reunirse con su madre cuando tenía solo diez años. Durante la preparatoria, mientras aplicaba para admisión al colegio, descubrió algo que le cambió la vida: Akiko era indocumentada. Su estado migratorio casi desvió sus sueños de convertirse en enfermera, pero gracias a su persistencia, trabajo duro, y a la acción diferida para inmigrantes que llegaron en su infancia, esta primavera recibió su credencial de enfermera registrada. Hablamos con Akiko de sus experiencias al crecer en California, la importancia de #Health4All, y su trabajo con ASPIRE, un grupo de jóvenes indocumentados que están movilizando para proteger los derechos de las familias inmigrantes.

Los Defensores Avanzan #Health4All en los Condados de Construyendo Comunidades Saludables (BHC)

Los Defensores de #Health4All han ganado una victoria impresionante en Fresno esta primavera, convencieron a la mayoría de la Junta de Supervisores que reversaran la decisión, que tomaron el año anterior, de negar a inmigrantes indocumentados cobertura médica.

La historia comienza en el año 2014, cuando la Junta de Supervisores votó a favor de obstruir que el Programa de Servicios a Personas Medicamente Indigentes proporcionara asistencia a residentes indocumentados. Dado el número amplio de inmigrantes y jornaleros en el Valle Central, este fue un golpe muy fuerte.

Los defensores se movilizaron inmediatamente. El momento decisivo ocurrió cuando “la conversación cambió de enfoque. En vez de enfocarse en el dólares e ilegales se enfocaron en las personas afectadas,” dice Sandra F. Celeotn-Castro, Gerente del Centro de Construyendo Comunidades Saludables en Fresno.

Fue extremadamente importante el darle una cara a la campaña. Más de 1,000 residentes de Fresno firmaron depresores de lengua como un llamado a la necesidad de acceso a cuidado médico para todos. Estos fueron presentados durante la reunión de la Junta de Supervisores.

Los defensores ayudaron a organizar vigilias de oración, marchas y juntas comunitarias. “La participación en cada evento fue entre 50-250 personas,” dice ella. Adicionalmente, más de 500 votantes llamaron a su representante local en apoyo a #Health4AllFresnans.

El nuevo programa de $5.6 millones, que fue aprobado a principios de abril, es diferente al Programa de Servicios Para Personas Medicamente Indigentes en varios aspectos importantes, y se enfocará exclusivamente en el cuidado de corto plazo, e incluye algunas especialidades, tal como tratamiento en contra del cáncer y cirugía para los cálculos biliares.

Una lucha muy similar se está llevando a cabo en Sacramento. En el 2009 durante los días más obscuros de la recesión, la Junta de Supervisores votó a favor de no proporcionar fondos para muchos de los servicios de salud para los inmigrantes indocumentados. Hoy con la recuperación económica en camino, muchos defensores de derechos a los inmigrantes y defensores de la salud pública buscan un cambio.

Durante una junta rebosante en el mes de marzo, defensores de #Health4All abogaron a los Supervisores para que restableciera la asistencia. El Alcalde Kevin Johnson estuvo dentro de los que hablaron a favor del cambio, al decir a los Supervisores, “Queremos asegurar que todos tengan cobertura de salud médica. Esto es lo que creemos aquí. Ese es el Sacramento en el cual nosotros creemos.”

Jaime Soto, el Obispo Romano Católico de Sacramento, también urgió a la Junta de Supervisores que expandieran los servicios de salud, haciendo un llamado a todos los miembros que respetaran la humanidad esencial de todos los residentes. “Dios creó a su gente,” anunció Soto. “Por nosotros creamos otra categoría de no-humanos” que incluye a los pobres, los desempleados y a los indocumentados.

¡Seguirá Sacramento el ejemplo de Fresno? ¡Mantente al tanto!

Noticias de Última Hora

¡Mientras esta edición se finalizaba, la Junta de Supervisores de Sacramento aprobó un programa de prueba de #Health4All valorado en $5 millones para cubrir a los muchos residentes indocumentados que viven en el condado!
Para aprender si es elegible para DAPA, CoveredCA.com o llame al (800) 300-1506.

“Más de un millón de californianos indocumentados no pueden ver al doctor. Hay personas que viven con dolor, o mueren, de enfermedades prevenibles.”

– Sergio Romo, SF Giants

Para aprender si es elegible para cobertura médica a través de Covered California, visite CoveredCA.com o llame al (800) 300-1506.
En una edición previa del boletín de la salud empieza aquí, escribí que el recurso más valioso de California es su gente. Para mí y mis compañeros en The California Endowment, esto es más que un lema. Es un valor fundamental que guía nuestro trabajo diario.

Nosotros creemos que para que nuestro estado triunfe a largo plazo, cada individuo necesita más oportunidad para desarrollar a su potencial máximo. Los jóvenes de hoy pueden ser nuestros creadores de trabajos en el futuro, líderes políticos, e iconos culturales. Pero si fallamos en proporcionarles a ellos y a sus familias los elementos fundamentales de una vida saludable, la pérdida de talento humano será épico.

La edición de la salud empieza aquí se enfoca en un grupo de residentes a los que frecuentemente se les ha negado lo justo: californianos indocumentados. Nuestro estado es hogar a aproximadamente 3 millones de residentes indocumentados, principalmente originarios de México y América Central. Ellos vienen en busca de una vida mejor para ellos y sus hijos. Muchos han estado en el país por décadas y han creado a sus familias aquí y pagan impuestos.

A pesar de sus contribuciones, los californianos indocumentados son sistemáticamente negados acceso a recursos que necesitan para construir una vida saludable. Sus comunidades son unas de las más contaminadas; sus escuelas son de las peores. Y a ellos se les prohíbe, por ley, el comprar cobertura médica a través de Covered California y a través del intercambio de cobertura Obamacare, aun cuando utilizan su propio dinero. Eso no es solo injusto a estos contribuyentes de impuestos, es malo para todos. Enfermera de la Bahía Akiko Aspillaga explica por qué y comparte su experiencia como californiana indocumentada en nuestra entrevista principal en la página 7.

La campaña de The California Endowment #Health4All está trabajando para crear conciencia sobre las brechas en la red de seguridad de California y para abogar por los cambios y así ayudar a la gente a mantenerse saludable. El movimiento está fermentándose. En la página 6, usted puede leer sobre cómo un grupo de defensores cambiaron las mentes de la Junta de Supervisores del Condado de Fresno, y los convencieron a continuar la proporción de servicios de salud a residentes indocumentados—una victoria para los residentes locales.

Las órdenes ejecutivas recientes del Presidente Obama en cuanto a la inmigración también son un avance importante. Al proteger a los padres y niños de amenaza de deportación reduce una gran fuente de tensión para las familias y los alienta a salir de la sombra y a reclamar beneficios a los cuales ellos tienen derecho. Aunque estas leyes de orden ejecutivas están bajo examen, nuestros sitios de Construyendo Comunidades Saludables están ayudando a californianos indocumentados a prepararse para que actúen rápidamente cuando la nueva ley entre en efecto.

Estoy orgulloso de nuestros sitios BHC por actuar con fortaleza para ayudar a nuestros vecinos indocumentados y por todo lo que hacen para crear oportunidades para nuestra gente.
Sitios Construyendo Comunidades Saludables Avanzando Hacia #Health4All

El objetivo de la campaña es mejorar el acceso a cuidado de salud para todo californiano independiente de su estado migratorio.

A la Ley de Cuidado de Salud Asequible, también conocida como “Obamacare,” se le acredita con reducir los rangos de personas no aseguradas; más de 15 millones de americanos ahora tienen cobertura médica como resultado directo de la ley.

Desafortunadamente, Obamacare hizo poco para ayudar a californianos indocumentados a recibir cobertura. Aun los californianos indocumentados que han vivido aquí y han pagado impuestos por décadas han sido excluidos de comprar cobertura médica a través de Covered California, el intercambio de seguro médico del estado.

CONTINUAN EN LA PÁGINA 4