



February 26, 2025

The Honorable David Valadao
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Valadao,

We are behavioral health and child-serving providers, workers, consumers, advocates, and family members, and we are urging you to reject Medicaid cuts, as proposed in the House Budget Reconciliation Framework. As drafted, the proposal would devastate California's Medicaid program, Medi-Cal, and would have particularly severe impacts on access to behavioral health services for California's children.

In California, 5 million children get their health care through Medi-Cal. This is roughly half of all kids in the state. Counties in Congressional District 22 have even higher enrollment rates. In Tulare County, nearly 4 out of 5 children are enrolled in Medi-Cal. In Kings County, 62% of kids are covered by Medi-Cal, and in Kern County it is 70%. The \$5.8 billion spent on Medi-Cal in your district just last year provides these children with basic preventive care, including vaccines, dental exams, and behavioral health treatment. This program is a lifeline for the children in your district and an economic engine for their communities.

As a result of structural racism, economic challenges, and the COVID-19 pandemic, California children are experiencing an unprecedented behavioral health crisis. Rates of depression and anxiety in children have increased by 70% since 2017. One in three teenagers is now experiencing serious psychological distress and opioid-related overdoses among teens have tripled. In Tulare County, psychiatric hospitalizations of youth ages 9 to 13 rose 23% in 2020.

At the same time, behavioral health providers, workers, schools, and other child-serving institutions have risen to the challenge. Throughout Congressional District 22, schools are hiring more social workers and counselors, community-based providers are opening their doors to more young people, and health systems are launching innovative programs to address the mental health needs of young people. Just last year, a new, 16-bed psychiatric health facility for children opened in Bakersfield to provide a safe and welcoming space for kids in need of intensive services. Kern County's Youth Multi-Agency Service Team (Youth-MIST) helps children who are dealing with behavioral health and social challenges and are at-risk of being removed from their homes or are in the process of being reunified with their families.

But Congressional District 22 can't do this without Medicaid. The proposed cuts would mean that community-based behavioral health providers would close, schools would be forced to lay off counselors, hospital psychiatric departments would be eliminated, and children and families would be abandoned.

Furthermore, adding burdensome work requirements to Medicaid would directly harm children by kicking their caregivers off coverage. While the majority of adults enrolled in Medicaid are working, the most common reason for not working is caregiving. Parents should not be forced to choose between providing care for their children and accessing health care. Children of parents

without health coverage are also less likely to access health care, regardless of their own coverage status.

Please stand up for California children and families. Vote NO on any cuts to Medicaid.

Kiran Savage-Sangwan
Executive Director
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

Leslie McFarlane
Co Founder and Director
Around Birth Collective

Mayra Alvarez
President
The Children's Partnership

Jodi Kurata
CEO
Association of Community Human Service
Agencies

Adrienne Shilton
Vice President, Public Policy and Strategy
California Alliance of Child and Family
Services

Josh Selo
CEO
Bill Wilson Center

Mike Odeh
Senior Director of Policy
Children Now

Linda Asato
Executive Director
California Child Care Resource & Referral
Network

Le Ondra Clark Harvey, PH.D
Chief Executive Officer
California Behavioral Health Association

Jevon Wilkes
Executive Director
California Coalition for Youth

Sara Roos
Chair, CADEM Children's Caucus - for
identification purposes only

Carlos Alarcon
Health Policy Analyst
California Immigrant Policy Center

Mario A. Ortega
CEO
Abrazar, Inc.

Sergio J. Morales
Executive Director
California School-Based Health Alliance
(CSHA)

Sarah Ngzsi Ngela
Coordinatrice Nationale
Actions Communautaires pour le
Développement de la Femme—ACODEFEM

Sarah Diaz
Policy and Media Coordinator
California WIC Association

Kristin Power
Vice President, Policy & Advocacy
Alliance for Children's Rights

Katherine M. Karpe
Chief Executive Officer
Casa de Amparo

Meredith FM Kennedy, MPH
Executive Director
American Academy of Pediatrics, CA
Chapter 3

Shawna Morris
Chief Executive Officer
Casa Pacifica Centers for Children &
Families

Ryan C. Eisenberg, Ed.D.
CEO
Children's Health Council

Terry Kim
Director of Government Relations &
Advocacy
Children's Institute

Debra Wood
Director of Programs and Policy
Community Health Initiative of Orange
County

Marena Brown
Executive Director
Contra Costa Youth Service Bureau

Laura Marcus
CEO
Dientes Community Dental Care

Daphne Pleasant
Chief Executive Officer
EMBRACE Mental Health

Karla Thomas
Executive Director
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities
(EPIC)

Mariana Moore
Senior Director
Ensuring Opportunity Campaign

Annette M Kunzman
President
FASD Network of Southern California

Annette Kunzman
Director
FASDNow!

Courtney Armstrong
Director of Government Affairs
First 5 Association of California

Tom Alexander
CEO
Fred Finch Youth & Family Services

Christine Smith
Policy & Legislative Advocate
Health Access California

Helen Torres
CEO and Executive Director
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality
(HOPE)

Tiffany Sickler, PhD
Executive Director
Koinonia Family Services

Laura Heintz, Psy.D.
CEO
Stanford Sierra Youth & Families

Patricia Reyes
Co-chair, Health Care Task Force
Multi-faith ACTION Coalition

Nabila Dunbar
Director of Advocacy and Engagement
National Council of Jewish Women Los
Angeles

Myron Dean Quon, Esq.
Chief Executive Officer
Pacific Asian Counseling Services

Drew Furedi, Ed.D
President & Chief Executive Officer
Para Los Niños

Victoria Kelly
Chief Executive Officer
Redwood Community Services

Muriel Nouwezem
CEO
Saban Community Clinic

Amanda Dickey
Executive Director, Government Relations
Santa Clara County Office of Education

Christine Isana Garcia
CEO
Side by Side

Becky Patsey
Human Resources Manager
Sierra Child and Family Services, Inc.

Wendee Winter
CPNP-PC
Sierra Vista Children's Health Center

Shakeel Syed
Executive Director
South Asian Network

Lorna Little, MSW
President and CEO
St Anne's Family Services

Gabriela Galicia
Executive Director
Street Level Health Project

Wendy Wang, MPP
Chief Public Policy and Advocacy Officer
Sycamores

Hellan Roth Dowden
CEO
Teachers for Healthy Kids

Lia Andrews, LCSW
Agency Administrator
The Heart Matters FFA

Melissa Hannah
Executive Director
United Parents

Bao Trieu
President & CEO
Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation (VIVO)

Karriann Farrell Hinds
Chief Strategy Officer
Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services

Oanh LE
CHW
VIVO

Maria Lemus
Executive Director
Vision y Compromiso

Sophia Mendoza
President
National Union of Healthcare Workers

Sabrina Jimenez
CEO
pasito x pasito LLC

Sarah M. Smith
LCSW
Alameda Family Services

Maria Cadenas
Executive Director
Ventures

Ronald E. Brown, Ph.D.
President & CEO
All For Kids

Hugo Morales
Co-Executive Director
Radio Bilingüe, Inc

Theresa Comstock
Executive Director
California Coalition for Behavioral Health

Bill Stewart
President
CA Assoc. of Local Behavioral Health
Boards/Commissions

Dana Paycao
Senior Policy Coordinator
National Center for Youth Law

Rita Martinez
Certified Enrollment Counselor
Worksite Wellness LA

Candice Adam-Medefind
Executive Director
Healthy House Within a MATCH Coalition

Kevan Insko
Director
Friends Committee on Legislation of
California

Amy Vu and Sydney Zetune
Co-Executive Directors
FEAST for All

Martin Noguez
211 Director
United Way of Tulare County

Jana Wright
Director of Policy
Insure the Uninsured Project

Pamela Estes
CEO
Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach - Also
serving Lake Forest and Mission Viejo

Margaret A. Baker, DrPH
Convener
South Bay People Power

Ken Berrick
President and CEO
Just Advocates

Susan Gomez
CEO
Inland Empire Community Collaborative

Susan Cortopassi
Executive Director
Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
Contractors' Association of San Mateo
County

Silvano Vazquez
Associate Director of Programas
Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing
Project (MICOP)

Jessica Rosenbaum
COO
Full Circle Health Network

Cheryl Rode
President & CEO
San Diego Center for Children

Elvia Torres
CEO
SPIRITT Family Services

Susan Fette, MFT
Chief Executive Officer
TLC Child and Family Services

Mary Trimble Norris
Executive Director
American Indian Child Resource Center

Mary Jo Ramirez
Executive Director
California Family Life Center

Khiabeth
Health Justice Manager
(ORALE) Organizing Rooted in Abolition
Liberation and Empowerment

Kerry Ahearn, LCSW
CEO
Aldea Children and Family Services

Tatiana Stewart
Foster Care Program Director
A Better Way Inc

Rachel Liebert Lewis
Director of Public Policy and Advocacy
Easterseals Northern California

Alyssum Maguire
Executive Director
Progress Ranch Treatment Center

David Kane
Attorney
Western Center on Law & Poverty

Erin O'Brien
President & CEO
Community Solutions for Children, Families
& Individuals

Noé Páramo
Legislative Advocate
CRLA Foundation

Michelle D. Gonzalez
President & CEO
TrueCare

Cuc Duong
Staff of VIVO
VIVO

Joshua Leonard
CEO
East Bay Agency for Children

Robin Bowen
Executive Director
Child Parent Institute

Rachel Kafele
Director of Programs and Advocacy
Oasis Legal Services

Simona Cataldo
CEO
Victor

Sue Evans
COO
Walden Family Services

Jeff Farber
Executive Director
Helpline Youth Counseling

Mar Velez
Director of Policy
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California

Zoila Bravo
Founder
Healthy Kids Happy Faces (HKHF)

Jill Dominguez
Executive Director/President
Mary's Path

Jennifer Fish, MD
Family Physician
HPEACE

Aubree Sweeney
Executive Director
Rancho San Antonio

Stacey A. Katz
CEO,, WestCoast Children's Clinic
WestCoast Children's Clinic

Melissa Martire
Chief Financial Officer
For The Future

Samia H. Rafeedie, OTD, OTR/L, BCPR,
CBIS, FAOTA
President of the Occupational Therapy
Association of California
The Occupational Therapy Association of
California

Jack Hinojosa
CEO
Child Development Resources of Ventura
County, Inc.

Stacey Roth
CEO
Hillsides

T. Weiston-Serdan
Chief Visionary Officer
Youth Mentoring Action Network

Nikki Dominguez
Policy Director
Asian Americans Advancing Justice
Southern California (AJSOCAL)

Graciela Soto Perez
Chief Executive Officer
Altura Centers for Health

Patricia Lozano
Executive Director
Early Edge California

Diane Ortiz
CEO
Youth Alliance

Yessika Magdaleno
President
Child Care Business Institute

Saran Tugsjargal
Student Commissioner ACSE
California Department of Education

Anna Legue
Occupational Therapist
Corona-Norco Unified School District

Chelsie Chung
Occupational Therapist
California Children's Services- Riverside
County

Sue Adee Levine
OTR/L
The Family Well OT

Bill Izabal
President & Founder
ListoAmerica

Chris Burns
Executive Director
Boys Republic

Susan M Walker
Director
SPOT INC

Sylvia Lee Mann
CEO
Southland Symphony Orchestra and Chorus

Colleen Carroll
Director of Occupational Therapy
Gateways Hospital and Mental Health
Centers

Shirley Kluver
Chief Executive Officer
Central Valley Recovery Services

Helena Lopez
CEO
A Greater Hope

Elisa Koff-Ginsborg
Executive Director
Behavioral Health Contractors' Association

Janice E Thurston
Occupational Therapist
Health Patterns LLC

Lorri Galloway
Executive Director
The Eli Home for Abused Children

Meghan Medlin
Chief Executive Officer/Founder
Hub for Integration, Reentry & Employment
(HIRE)

Ellen Pais
Executive Director
Pretend City Children's Museum

Rigoberto Garnica
Executive Director
Escuela de la Raza Unida

Leah Ersoylu
President
Ersoylu Consulting

Jamie McDonald
Executive Director
American Academy of Pediatrics - Orange
County Chapter

Heather Chapman
Co-Executive Director
Unidos South OC, Inc.

Susan Parmelee
Executive Director
Wellness and Prevention Center

Victoria Stephan
Consultant
Inland Empire Coverage and Health
Initiative (IE-CHI)

Andrae Gonzales
Executive Director
Children First Campaign

Brian Poth
Executive Director
The Source LGBT+ Center

Karmi Ferguson
Executive Director
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

Lucy Santana
Chief Executive Officer
Girls Inc. of Orange County

David Smith
Co-Chair
Advocates for Peace & Justice, Irvine
United Church of Christ

Patricia Wenskunas
Founder and CEO
Crime Survivors, Inc.

Rylee Peak
Chief Executive Officer
World Class Alliance

Monique Daviss
Executive Director
El Sol Science & Arts Academy of Santa Ana

Michael Arnot
Executive Director
Children's Cause Orange County

Jenny Davidson
Head of School
Montessori in Redlands

Graciela Soto Perez
Chief Executive Officer
Altura Centers for Health

Liz Qaqiesh
Executive Director
Litehouse Children and Family Services

Jamie Serrano
CEO
Boys & Girls Clubs of Tustin

Elba Gonzalez-Mares
Executive Director
Community Health Initiative Napa County

Ellen Marks
Director
California Brain Tumor Association

Shivani Amin
School based occupational therapist
Occupational Therapy Association of California

Samantha Gruen
Pediatric Occupational Therapist
Developing Mindful Lives LLC

Bryan Reece
CEO
JourneyGPS

Fred LaPuzza
Director
Office of Restorative Justice, Catholic
Diocese of Orange

Tammi Graham
Executive Director
First 5 Riverside County

Charna Widby
Assistant Director
Quality Start Riverside County

Cynthia Gonzalez
Staff Member
Children's Fund

Shaina Katz
Occupational Therapist
Optimist Youth Homes and Family Service

Sue Bowles
OTD, MBA, OTR/L
USC Chan Division of Occupational Science
and Occupational Therapy

Jacqueline Elkins
Board member, Developer and supervisor,
social enterprise
Beit T'Shuvah

Michael E Flaherty
Founder
Swim with Heart

Elaine M. Yamazaki-Sanchez
Doctor of Occupational Therapy
Occupational Therapy Association of
California

Ana Sandoval
Occupational Therapy Assistant
Rancho Los Amigos Nat'l Rehab Center

Monica J. Jones
OTD, OTR/L, PMH-C
Northern Inyo Hospital

Sarah-Michael Gaston
Deputy Director
Youth Forward

Marian Giao
OTR/L
Bruceville Terrace Skilled Nursing Facility

Cher Ofstedahl
CEO
Trinity Youth Services

Kaitlyn S. Kim, OTD, OTR/L
Gateways Hospital and Mental Health
Centers

Tom Corson
Executive Director
Kern County Network for Children

Dr. Beth Sullivan, OTD, OTR/L
Point Loma Nazarene University

Dee Slade
Executive Director
African American Network of Kern County

Christian Ventura, OTR/L, CHT
Los Angeles County DHS Olive View UCLA
Medical Center

Christine Haworth
Occupational Therapist
Occupational Therapy Training Program

Andrea M. Andrews
OTAS
Sacramento City College

Tammy Richmond
CEO/Founder
Go2Care

Linda Llamas, LMFT
Director
Desert Mountain Children's Center