

HEALTH EQUITY FOR IMMIGRANTS

HOUSE BILL 1482

Everyone deserves access to quality, affordable health care. For years, the Washington Legislature has taken meaningful steps to advance equity in health care access in our state by implementing solutions that expand health care coverage, including for immigrants in Washington. **The Health Equity for Immigrants Campaign urges the Legislature pass House Bill 1482 and continue to support health care coverage for low-income immigrants during the 2025 legislative session.**

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITIES THAT SUPPORT WASHINGTON

Immigrant communities are essential to the economic and cultural vitality of our state, yet they have lacked access to health coverage for years. By providing access to health care, we are able to reduce emergency room visits and increase access to preventive care, saving lives and lowering costs for hospitals and community clinics. The benefits of increasing access to health coverage extend far beyond the individuals that health care equity solutions directly serve – they create a healthier and stronger Washington. Washington advanced equitable access to health coverage in the 2023-2024 budget. We are urging the legislature to continue advancing solutions to address the great needs that communities face.

¹ Chu R, Peters C, Buchmueller T. Medicaid: The Health and Economic Benefits of Expanding Eligibility (Issue Brief No. HP[1]2024-17). Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. September 2024.

INVESTMENTS IN APPLE HEALTH EXPANSION AND CASCADE CARE BENEFIT ALL

Research¹ on Medicaid Expansion shows it strengthens state economies, reduces hospitals' uncompensated care costs and improves health outcomes. Apple Health Expansion has now provided coverage to almost 12,000 of the most vulnerable Washingtonians, with more than 11,000 still in the queue for program coverage. In addition, by providing Cascade Care subsidies to immigrants, we have allowed for thousands of low-income community members to finally access care.

ENSURING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE

We urge the Legislature to continue supporting health equity solutions and advance a future where everyone can access the care they need and deserve, including:

1. Furthering investment in Apple Health Expansion with a strong fiscal support and continuation of MCO care coordination;
2. Increasing access to Qualified Health and Dental Plans for immigrant community members with increased Cascade Care subsidies for those not eligible for federal APTCs;
3. Supporting the establishment of a “community accountability committee” to maximize accountability to the community for immigrant health coverage programs;
4. Ensure that immigrant communities are supported with trusted messenger and community based organizational resources who are familiar with their needs.

Together, we can build a Washington composed of communities that are strong, healthy and vibrant – and ensure that they remain healthy in the future. We urge the Legislature to take meaningful steps to continue its work to advance health equity during the 2025 legislative session by passing HB 1482.