CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

Senate

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
95814

April 21, 2015

Senator Mark Leno, Chair
Senate Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblywoman Shirley Weber, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Leno and Assemblywoman Weber:

We are writing to respectfully urge the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees to restore funding for Medi-Cal providers that were reduced by 10 percent during the recent budget crisis. These funds should be a high priority in order to promote better access to health care for the 12.2 million Californians who rely on Medi-Cal.

As enrollment in Medi-Cal approaches one-third of California's population, the unfortunate reality is that many people are having trouble finding a doctor who will see them in a timely manner. In recent reports, the Legislative Analyst's Office and the California State Auditor have pointed out that Medi-Cal provides less access to physicians and dentists than other types of health insurance. Continuing to implement the 10 percent provider rate reductions is making this problem worse.

We understand that the state's Medi-Cal program is already one of the fastest growing programs in the state budget, and we recognize that there are other programs competing for state resources. However, the intent of the Medi-Cal program is not simply to give Medi-Cal recipients an insurance card, but to actually provide access to health care services. With Medi-Cal rates well below private insurance and Medicare rates, many medical professionals who would like to serve Medi-Cal patients simply cannot afford to do so.

It is our belief that restoring the 10 percent provider rate cuts should be the beginning and not the end of the discussion on Medi-Cal rates. However, we recognize that the state's budget situation remains precarious and that the Governor has appropriately called for fiscal caution. Therefore, restoring the rate reductions is a reasonable and achievable first step to improve

Medi-Cal recipients' access to providers without posing undue risk to California's budget stability.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Bob Huff
Senator Republican Leader

Jean Fuller
Senate Republican Leader Elect

Senator Janet Nguyen
Vice- Chair Senate Health Committee

Jeff Stone

Tom Berryhill

Joel Anderson

Sharon Runner