



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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April 9, 2009

The Honorable Dave Jones
Member of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 6005

RE:*AB 23 (Jones) as amended on April 2, 2009*
Set for hearing in Senate Health Committee April 15, 2009
Position: Support

On behalf of the University of California (UC), I am writing to advise you of our support for AB 23 (Jones) as amended April 2, 2009. UC owns and operates academic medical centers (AMCs) at the Davis, Los Angeles, Irvine, San Diego, and San Francisco campuses and is the fourth-largest healthcare delivery system in California. UC provides much of the complex care in California, which can often only be provided in an academic medical center, including half of all transplants, one-fourth of extensive burn care, and operating or staffing five Level 1 trauma centers throughout the state. UC also provides high-quality care to many publicly insured patients and a significant component of the state's uninsured population.

UC supports efforts to maintain health insurance coverage for those individuals who have been laid off from their jobs as a result of our softening economy. Increasing numbers of the uninsured must now obtain access to health care through hospital emergency rooms, which places a strain on the entire healthcare system, at significant cost. Moreover, the disruption of the patient-primary care provider relationship can have negative effects on health outcomes.

This bill would require health plans and insurers, among others to provide notice of the availability of premium assistance under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to individuals for this assistance, and would make other conforming changes to allow these individuals to receive Cal-COBRA coverage with that premium assistance. The bill would also authorize the Director of the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) and the Insurance Commissioner to adopt emergency regulations in the event that any federal assistance is or becomes available to persons eligible for Cal-COBRA.

This bill seeks to assist the recently unemployed with financial assistance to pay for health insurance premiums and consequently maintain a connection to a primary care provider. UC strongly supports this proposal and the maintenance of patient-centered primary care.

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For the reasons listed above, UC supports AB 23. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact call me at (916) 445-5572.

Sincerely,

Angela M. Gilliard, JD

Angela M. Gilliard
Legislative Director

cc: Members, Senate Health Committee
 President M. G. Yudof
 Vice President Dan Dooley
 Associate Vice President Steve Juarez