



February 10, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Building, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Sent via email - governor@gov.ca.gov

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of [Health Center Partners of Southern California](#) and its 17 member primary care organizations, which together serve more than 917,000 patients each year, for 3.9 million patient visits each year, at 160 practice sites across San Diego, Riverside, and Imperial counties, **I ask the administration to delay the start of the Pharmacy Transition until January 2022.**

Community Health Centers are leaders in developing systems of care that are well coordinated and integrate primary medical care with mental health, dental, substance use treatment and health education. **Health Center Partners' members provide health care services to California's most diverse populations like, unhoused individuals in downtown San Diego, migrant farmworkers in northern San Diego and Riverside, the border regions in Imperial county and San Ysidro, Indian Health Services Organizations (both urban and sovereign), and Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest.**

I am aware of the time and investment the state has made in the pharmacy transition; however, the state and its health care delivery system must remain laser focused on managing the COVID pandemic. The pandemic continues to strain health care delivery systems, as our members care for their patients in Community Health Centers, and work to expand vaccination efforts.

I appreciate the administration's leadership in doubling down on its efforts to secure vaccines, establish and strengthen communications and distribution, and determine an appropriate and equitable method for setting priorities that include Community Health Center patients. **Given the magnitude of work ahead to address the pandemic Community Health Centers must focus their energy and resources on COVID, until the safety-net communities in California become vaccinated.**



Providers and health plans have systems in place today to ensure pharmacy access for Medi-Cal beneficiaries, which can continue under the current structure. **Delaying the transition at the last minute, as was done in December 2020, will undermine an already strained delivery system and further confuse and worry Medi-Cal beneficiaries.** Further, our members anticipate some retail pharmacies may have to close because of the transition. Shuttering pharmacies now, which patients rely on, would come at the worst possible time for them, and the delivery system as it is responding to the pandemic.

Community Health Centers fulfill an irreplaceable role in California's health care system, a role that is more essential now than ever. **I urge the administration to act quickly, acknowledge the gravity of this moment, and delay the transition now.**

I welcome the opportunity to speak with you further on this important matter. Please let me know how Health Center Partners may be of assistance to you as you consider this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Henry N. Tuttle".

Henry N. Tuttle
President and Chief Executive Officer

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[Health Center Partners of Southern California](#), a family of companies, includes a 17-membership organization of federally qualified health centers, Indian Health Services Organizations, both urban and sovereign, and Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, collectively serving 917,000 patients each year, for 3.9 million patient visits each year, at 160 practice sites across San Diego, Riverside seventh largest provider group in the region. [Read our latest Impact Report.](#)