

Having Our Say!

A coalition of over 30 organizations, advocating for communities of color in California.

Having Our Say Coalition 2022: Policy Priorities¹

(Updated 4/20/22)

Who we are: The Having Our Say (HOS) Coalition was founded in 2007 to raise the voices of communities of color in the health reform debate and the fight for access to quality health care. We integrate community voices into multifaceted advocacy initiatives actively consider a wide range of factors impacting our health. These factors, known as [the 'social determinants of health'](#), include health care access and quality, economic stability, education access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context. The coalition has brought together more than 30 member organizations, including grassroots community organizations, health care clinics and providers, and advocates to fight for health equity and racial justice.

Health Access and Equity

HOS continues to champion initiatives that create universal, equitable, and culturally congruent access to health care for communities of color. The ongoing issues of lack of insurance coverage and precarious access to care for marginalized communities has been further highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advance Health4All: [AB 4 \(Arambula\)](#) & [SB 56 \(Durazo\)](#). The Governor's FY 2021-22 budget made history making California the first state to include all undocumented income-eligible immigrants aged 50+ in Medi-Cal. While this is an important step, California must continue the job by extending Medi-Cal to all adults regardless of immigration status which is especially needed given the disproportionate impact of COVID on immigrant communities. HOS support these initiatives to ensure that everyone can access vital health care services.

Improve Mental Health outreach for Medi-Cal*: [SB 1019 \(Gonzalez\)](#) begins to remedy longstanding issues with the underutilization of Medi-Cal mental health benefits among communities of color, by requiring health plans to conduct culturally and linguistically relevant outreach to patients and providers to help connect individuals to care. Additionally, this bill seeks to elevate patient experiences so that we can appropriately account for personal experiences that are currently not tracked by Med-Cal Managed Care plans.

Fund the Medi-Cal Health Navigators Program*: [AB 2680 \(Arambula\)](#) would ensure individuals can access services from culturally and linguistically diverse Navigators who come from their communities by directly contracting with community-based organizations to provide these services. Medi-Cal Health Navigators are essential to ensuring Californians have additional avenues to seek outreach and assistance with enrollment, retention, and utilization of Medi-Cal services and benefits. The majority of Medi-Cal members are communities of color, Limited English Proficient, and low-income communities but it is very difficult to navigate and understand all services individuals are eligible for, not to mention the lack of linguistic and culturally relevant support that exists within the system.

¹ **Our Policy Priorities:** The Having Our Say Coalition (HOS) recognizes that health is about more than access to health care. Despite the passage of inclusive policies, California continues to face challenges with the distribution of resources, institutional racism, and entrenched social systems; all of which, disproportionately impact the ability for communities of color to access opportunities that will lead individuals to live holistically healthy lives. The HOS 2022 Policy Priorities reflect the consensus of our coalition across a diverse platform of issue areas that can each impact a person's ability to live a healthy life.

*This is also a CPEHN 2022 priority issue.

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Food and Nutrition Access

HOS remains committed to ensuring that communities of color have access to the nutritional options that enable them to grow, thrive, and maintain a high quality of health. Currently, many Californians already experiencing food insecurity pre-pandemic have continued to struggle with further diminished resources and many remain excluded from support due to immigration status.

Improve Access to Affordable, Healthy Food Prepared by Street Vendors: [SB 972 \(Gonzalez\)](#)

would decriminalize street vending by creating more accessible street vending permits and updating the state retail code. In many communities, these members of the more informal food industry often encounter insecurity maintaining their businesses and the families supported through their income. Improving legal protections can safeguard a mainstay of economic stability and nutrition access for many local BIPOC communities.

Reproductive Justice

As a coalition, HOS acknowledges the crucial role that bodily autonomy and access to resources supporting individual agency play in reproductive health. These decisions can either strengthen or hinder how communities are able to thrive. Having this in mind, we support both proactive and retroactive measures aiming to remedy present disparities faced by communities of color.

Establish a Reproductive Health Equity Program: [AB 2134 \(Weber & Garcia\)](#) would create an incentivized program for health providers through the establishment of the Reproductive Health Equity Program. The program would provide grants to those offering reproductive and sexual health care, free of charge, to patients who are low-income and lack access to health coverage for services. The initiative would expand affordability and timely access to care for both abortion related and contraceptive services.

Doula Care: [AB 2199 \(Wicks\)](#) would create the Birthing Justice for California Families Pilot Project which would provide grants to entities offering doula care (full spectrum) and services. A 3-year pilot project, this legislation would establish institutional funding for culturally-informed, community-based care by a doula that supports the full range of needs for a pregnant person including any and all outcomes of pregnancy.

Establish the Reproductive Justice and Freedom Fund: [AB 2586 \(C. Garcia\)](#) would establish a workgroup to examine the root causes of inequities found in reproductive and sexual health care administration. This would expand on work the CA Department of Public health is tasked with as the state entity in charge of developing a coordinated statewide strategy for this realm of healthcare. This bill would also establish the Reproductive Justice and Freedom Fund which would require the Commission on the Status of Girls to provide grants (over a three year period) to organizations providing culturally congruent resources and medical services to the communities in their service area.

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Reproductive Justice -continued

Establishes the Abortion Practical Support Fund: [SB 1142 \(Caballero & Skinner\)](#) seeks to improve public access to information, funding and research about abortion services. The legislation would require the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS) (or designated entity) to create a website with specified abortion services information for the general public. Also, it would establish the Abortion Practical Support Fund to provide non-profit entities funding for abortion supportive services and to provide public research institutions funding to conduct research on how to support equitable abortion services. The funding would be administered by the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

Community Safety and Civic Engagement

HOS recognizes the negative impact and challenges with trust many marginalized communities experience through interactions with policing, related violence, traditional forms of community safety and limited access to meaningful civic engagement. All have direct implications on aspects of health which must be addressed in ways that center community perspectives in decision making and avoid unnecessary harm.

Establish the California New Motor Voter Program: [SB 583 \(Newman\)](#) would expand the ease of access to and promote greater civic engagement by streamlining the process to register to vote. The proposed legislation would require the Department of Motor Vehicles to submit eligible data to the Secretary of State to initiate voter registration for eligible residents at the time of their applying for a driver's license or state identification card.