



Brown Signs Bill To Collect Data on Diversity of Health Care Workforce

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

Gov. Jerry Brown (D) has [signed a bill \(AB 2102\)](#) that aims to identify gaps in the diversity of California's health care workforce, [KPBS](#) reports.

Details of Bill

Under the bill, the state boards that oversee nurses, physician assistants and other medical providers will be required to report their workforce demographics, including workers':

- Ethnicities; and
- Spoken languages.

The data will be used to inform policymakers and educational institutions about where resources should be allocated to meet the cultural needs of patients, according to [KPBS](#).

The bill was sponsored by:

- The California Pan-Ethnic Health Network; and
- The Latino Coalition for a Healthy California.

Implications

Ramla Sahid, a fellow at the Women's Policy Institute and co-author of the bill, said the measure will help officials determine residents' needs. She said, "Patients are more likely to seek care if providers understand the cultural and linguistic needs of the communities they serve."

Sahid also said that data collected under [AB 2102](#) could push the passage of a separate bill ([AB 2325](#)) that would improve Medi-Cal beneficiaries' access to interpreters at physician offices and hospitals across the state. Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid program.

[AB 2325](#) would:

- Establish a registry of medical interpreters; and
- Implement Medi-Cal coverage for interpreters.

The bill currently is awaiting Brown's approval, but the governor has vetoed similar measures twice before.

She said, "We don't have good information ... [s]o part of this is collecting evidence and making sure we understand what the picture looks like," adding, "Hopefully [AB 2102] sets a precedent where [AB 2325] can pass one day, or universities change their recruiting practices in communities, or new pipelines develop where we're strengthening the workforce" (Burks, KPBS, 9/22).

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