



Dear Chairman Chaffee,

On behalf of Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County, I am writing in support of CalOptima's ordinance change to permit the County Organized Health System to offer a Covered California health plan, also known as an exchange or marketplace plan. The Board of Supervisors will have two hearings on the matter, May 10 and May 24.

Orange County is fortunate to have CalOptima as a high quality Medi-Cal plan for our community's vulnerable residents. Further, CalOptima has demonstrated its longstanding commitment to the community since 1995, continually expanding its programs and the number of residents it serves. At this time, 1 in 4 Orange County residents is a CalOptima member.

Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County shares CalOptima's priority of providing continuity of care for Medi-Cal members. Many residents, due to life circumstances, such as losing or gaining employment or experiencing a family crisis, waver between being eligible for Medi-Cal and being ineligible. The temporary loss of Medi-Cal coverage in which people are enrolled and disenrolled is referred to as "churn." Having to switch insurers, find a new doctor and worry about continued access to care is chaotic, challenging and concerning — particularly for those facing chronic health conditions. If CalOptima had a Covered California plan, former Medi-Cal members could more easily transition to that plan and keep their same providers.

Further, Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County appreciates that CalOptima has shown nearly three decades of commitment to bolstering the safety net and serving the local community. CalOptima has expressed that its Covered California plan will bring revenue that can be invested back into Orange County. Recently, CalOptima committed a total of \$58 million for grants to community health centers and funding for a street medicine program to improve homeless health services. With a new revenue stream of premium income from a Covered California plan, CalOptima will be able to further support its community-focused mission as a public agency, which is not beholden financially to shareholders with incentives counter to the mission. CalOptima has stated that it will use any profits to further enhance care and access for all in Orange County.

Like Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County, CalOptima has deep roots in Orange County and has demonstrated its ability to cultivate relationships and build provider and resource networks. We believe that CalOptima's expansion into a marketplace plan is a natural next step, and the timing is right in the post-pandemic environment. Offering residents the choice of a local health plan that knows them and our county creates a stronger health care system overall.



Again, Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County extends our full support to CalOptima's proposed Covered California plan for the benefit to both members and the community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ria Berger".

Ria Berger, MPA

Chief Executive Officer

Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County