



1215 K Street, Suite 2015, Sacramento, CA 95814

tel 916.448.7992 fax 916.448.0234 www.micra.org

MICRA

Protecting California's Most Vulnerable Populations

California's Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act (MICRA) ensures injured patients receive fair compensation while preserving patients' access to healthcare by keeping doctors, nurses and healthcare providers in practice and hospitals and clinics open. MICRA has saved healthcare consumers tens of billions of dollars. Any changes to MICRA would be most devastating to specialty services like OBGYNs, emergency providers, community clinics, and rural health providers who remain particularly vulnerable to any liability increases or weakening of MICRA's reforms.

WITHOUT MICRA, CALIFORNIA'S MOST VULNERABLE PATIENTS WOULD SUFFER FROM:

- **FEWER OBSTETRIC PROVIDERS**

MICRA's reforms have the most significant impact on obstetrics, the practice most vulnerable to litigation. Weakening them will worsen an already critical situation in obstetric care where the supply of physicians and healthcare providers is limited, but the demand is ever-growing.

- **COMMUNITY CLINIC AND PUBLIC HOSPITAL CUTBACKS**

California safety-net providers serve millions of uninsured patients, the majority of whom are women and children. Unable to shift higher insurance costs to their patients, these clinics will have no alternative but to care for fewer people.

Additionally, any weakening of MICRA will jeopardize access to care for low-income patients who receive care from county and UC health systems that are self-insured, as these providers would have to redirect funds away from care to pay for higher liability costs.

- **LESS PRENATAL CARE**

With fewer obstetric providers, women's access to early prenatal care will be reduced. Greater availability of prenatal care has resulted in California having one of the country's lowest infant mortality rates. Providers' ability to maintain this standard will be threatened if a major additional strain is placed on our maternal healthcare system.

- **RURAL CRISIS**

Those in underserved rural areas will be particularly hard hit by any further loss of healthcare providers. The economic viability of doctors practicing in these areas is already marginal due to sparse population and low insurance reimbursement for services. An increase in malpractice insurance costs will force many rural physicians to cut back on services or close their doors – further isolating rural patients.

- **REDUCED ACCESS TO HIV/AIDS SPECIALISTS**

Any weakening of MICRA will make it difficult for HIV/AIDS patients to find the specialists they need for treatment. Early access to care, especially within the first 12 months, is critical in seeking appropriate treatment by specialists. According to estimates by California HIV/AIDS Research Program at University of California, there were 62,000 cases of AIDS in California. If physicians aren't able to afford liability insurance to practice in California, many of these patients may be unable to find the appropriate means of care.

- **LESS PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE**

Weakening MICRA reforms will also reduce access to routine healthcare, including regular screenings for high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases and other serious health risks.

- **REDUCED ACCESS TO EMERGENCY ROOMS**

Emergency departments are also the front lines caring for uninsured and Medi-Cal patients and increased costs for malpractice would reduce funds for emergency care.