

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 billions of dollars.

Without MICRA, California's most vulnerable patients would suffer.

Fewer Obstetric Providers

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

Cutbacks to Community Clinics, Health Centers and Public Hospitals

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 community clinics and health centers will have no alternative but to care for fewer people.

Additionally, changing 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 from patient care to pay for increased 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.

Reduced Access to Emergency Rooms

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



Crisis for Rural Patients

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. According to 2010 estimates by the California Department of Public Health Office of AIDS, California has more than 69,000 AIDS patients. If physicians are not able to afford liability insurance to practice in California, many of these patients may be unable to find the appropriate care.

Less Preventative Healthcare

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