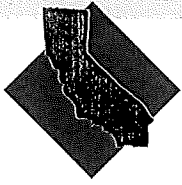


CALIFORNIA ADVOCATES, INC.



May 15, 2014

The Honorable Tom Ammiano
Member, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 3146
Sacramento, California 95814

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**SUBJECT: AB 2533 (AMMIANO)—OUT-OF-NETWORK PROVIDERS - OPPOSE
ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE – SUSPENSE FILE**

Dear Assembly Member Ammiano:

The California Association of Health Underwriters (CAHU) must respectfully **OPPOSE** your **AB 2533**, as amended May 6, 2014, to bar health plans and insurers from imposing higher out-of-pocket costs for out-of-network services

AB 2533 requires health plans and insurers, if an insured is unable to obtain a medically necessary covered service in an accessible and timely manner, from a contracted provider, the health insurer shall arrange for, or assist the insured in arranging for, the insured to receive the care or service in an accessible and timely manner from a non-contracting provider, and shall not impose copayments, coinsurance, or deductibles on the insured that exceed what an insured would pay for services from a contracting provider.

One of the core efficiencies of the managed care model is the use of an established medical provider network to ensure integrated care for enrollees at a reasonable cost. **AB 2533** requires, in the event a contracted provider for the specialty needed is not available in the health plan's network in a timely fashion, that the health plan must locate a non-contracting provider, arrange an appointment for the policyholder, and then pay that non-contracting provider the same rates as they would pay a contracted provider. CAHU is concerned that **AB 2533** unnecessarily drives up the cost of care while, at the same time, reducing the quality of care by undermining the ability of health care service plans to coordinate and manage care networks for their policyholders.

An additional concern is that **AB 2533** is silent on a key issue and will permit the non-contracted provider to get paid by the health plan--without having to comply with plan network standards--and then be able to "balance bill" the patient/consumer on the entire remaining unpaid portion of the non-contracting provider's retail billing amount.

Last, **AB 2533** does nothing to address core issue of network adequacy. CAHU believes a better solution would be for policymakers to bring stakeholders together to craft a workable, affordable, consensus solution on the larger issue of network adequacy.

The California Association of Health Underwriters is the state's largest association of health insurance agent, brokers and other health insurance industry professionals. Our members help millions of individual Californians and businesses evaluate, select, purchase and use their health care coverage plans, resulting in greater health and financial security. CAHU agents and brokers also act as advocates for policyholders and their families when coverage disputes arise. CAHU agents and brokers perform many functions for small employers with respect to managing their employee benefits program--at no additional cost to the small employer.

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For these reasons, CAHU must **OPPOSE your AB 2533**. We are available to discuss our concerns with you and your staff regarding the bill at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Julianne Broyles
On behalf of California Association of Health Underwriters

cc: Office of Governor Brown
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Lisa Murawski, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jennifer Louie, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office