

CAPITOL OFFICE  
STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 5108  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
TEL (916) 651-4022  
FAX (916) 327-8817

DISTRICT OFFICE  
1808 W. SUNSET BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90026  
TEL (213) 483-9300  
FAX (213) 483-9305

## California State Senate

SENATOR  
KEVIN DE LEÓN

CHAIR  
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
TWENTY-SECOND SENATE DISTRICT

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# Senate Bill 1002 (De León) Aligning Opportunities for Health Act of 2014

## PURPOSE:

Strengthen the alignment of Medi-Cal and CalFresh application and reporting periods to streamline benefit delivery and maximize access to federally-funded nutrition and health benefits for low-income families in California.

## BACKGROUND:

Reduced hunger and improved access to nutritious foods are fundamental goals of CalFresh, the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through which low-income Californians receive federally-funded food assistance. These objectives are strongly linked to supporting the overall health and well-being of children and adults who receive CalFresh. In an effort to further the connection between nutrition and health, and ensure that Californians receive federal benefits to which they are entitled, the link between CalFresh and Medi-Cal should be strengthened.

In 2013, Medi-Cal provided health coverage to more than eight million low-income Californians. Moreover, with the expansion of Medi-Cal eligibility under the Affordable Care Act, an estimated 1.4 million Californians are newly eligible for Medi-Cal as of January 2014. Many of these households covered through Medi-Cal also receive CalFresh.

Currently, CalFresh and Medi-Cal are integrated at the county level via the State Automated Welfare System (SAWS). This enables eligible individuals and families to enroll in both programs simultaneously. Recent efforts to promote horizontal integration between public benefit programs, such as CalFresh and Medi-Cal, have encouraged and supported dual enrollment at the initial point of application. However, this does not always happen. There are several reasons that a household may end up applying for one benefit but not the other or apply for benefits at different times. When they do, they are assigned multiple certification dates, resulting in the need to submit duplicative reports and paperwork. Consequently, families and counties are completing duplicate paperwork and resulting confusion may result in missed deadlines and list benefits.

This bill would build on efforts to improve both the health outcomes of low-income families and program efficiency by clarifying that a county may renew a person's Medi-Cal coverage if they are enrolled in CalFresh and requiring the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health Care Services to request federal waivers allowing for increased alignment for CalFresh and Medi-Cal application and redetermination processes.

**PROPOSAL:**

California has taken strides to improve dual enrollment and improve alignment between CalFresh and Medi-Cal. SB 1002 extends that work by improving program efficiencies for both administrators and the low-income families they serve.

**This bill would require:**

- Clarify that a county may renew a person's Medi-Cal coverage if they are enrolled in CalFresh. This will improve program efficiencies for both administrators and the low-income families they serve.
- Requiring that the Department of Social Services seek federal approval to use Medi-Cal enrollment to grant eligibility for CalFresh.

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**SUPPORT:** California Food Policy Advocates (co-sponsor)  
Western Center on Law and Poverty (co-sponsor)  
Alameda County Community Food Bank  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
Asian Law Alliance  
California Academy of Family Physicians  
California Association of Food Banks  
California Coverage and Health Initiatives  
California Center for Public Health Advocacy  
California Hunger Advocacy Coalition  
California Partnership  
California WIC Association  
Children Now  
Children's Defense Fund-California  
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization  
Community Food and Justice Coalition  
Congress of California Seniors  
CSUC Center for Nutrition & Activity Promotion  
Greenlining Institute  
Hunger Advocacy Network  
Jewish Family Service of San Diego  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank  
National Health Law Program  
North County Community Services Food Bank  
PICO California  
Redwood Empire Food Bank  
San Diego Hunger Coalition  
San Francisco Living Wage Coalition  
SF-Marin Food Bank  
St. Anthony Foundation  
The Children's Partnership  
United Ways of California

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*For more information, please contact: Claire Conlon, Legislative Aide, at (916) 651-4022.*

*(Updated 8/8/14)*