



# *CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT WELFARE COLLABORATIVE* **California Update**

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## **Health Insurance Legislation Passed in 2003 Faces November Test**

**The Health Insurance Act of 2003, which former Gov. Gray Davis signed into law and which is scheduled to go into effect beginning in 2006, will require that California employers who have 50 or more employees offer health insurance to their workers or pay into a state-administered fund that would be used to buy insurance for their employees. Employers with 200 or more workers will also be required to offer health insurance to their employees' dependents, including their children and spouses or domestic partners. It is expected that more than a million California workers who are currently uninsured would be eligible to receive benefits under the new law.**

However, opponents of the Health Insurance Act of 2003 have launched a campaign to prevent the new law from taking effect. They gathered enough signatures to require that the new law come before California voters in the form of Proposition 72, which will be on the November ballot. In order for the act to take effect, a majority of voters must vote yes on Proposition 72. If the measure fails, the act will not be implemented and will no longer be a state law.

Here's how the Health Insurance Act of 2003 would affect immigrants:

The new law would provide employment-based insurance to more than one million workers in California who are currently uninsured. Because immigrant workers are the least likely to have health coverage, they would benefit greatly from the law.

About 350,000 uninsured immigrant workers could benefit if the new law is implemented, according to an analysis performed by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research of data from the 2001 California Health Interview Survey (the analysis is dated Aug. 13, 2004). Approximately 650,000 family members of immigrant workers employed by firms with 200 or more employees could also be eligible for health coverage if the law goes into effect.\*

\* The 2001 California Health Interview Survey reports that 146,000 uninsured immigrants work in firms employing 200 or more employees. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the average family size of employed individuals is 3.43, yielding a total of approximately 650,000 family members who could potentially be covered under the act if it is assumed that immigrant families have the same average number of family members as the general population.

Over the last two decades, the number of workers and their families who are covered by employment-based insurance in the U.S. has declined. Passage of Prop 72 would be a first step

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The  
California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative  
announces *two all-day trainings* for service  
providers, immigrants' advocates and other  
individuals serving immigrant communities.

Come learn from and strategize with  
experts and peers from throughout the  
state about the current health, welfare and  
immigration issues affecting immigrant  
communities in California.

THE TRAINING DATES ARE

San Jose - Thur., Oct. 14, 2004  
Los Angeles - Wed., Oct. 27, 2004

Space is limited, so please register as soon  
as possible. To download the  
training registration forms, go to  
[www.nilc.org/trainings/](http://www.nilc.org/trainings/).

For more information, call Mike Muñoz at  
213.639.3900 x. 117.

### **THE CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT WELFARE COLLABORATIVE IS A JOINT PROJECT OF**

**Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California • Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles  
National Immigration Law Center • Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network**

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toward slowing this trend in California by making sure that working families have access to health insurance.

Four in ten Californians who do not speak English well are uninsured, often because either they are unaware of programs available to them or they find the system very difficult to navigate. Increasing the availability of benefits through the work-

place would make it easier for all immigrants, especially those who do not speak English well, to get coverage and secure health services for themselves and their families.

\* \* \*

Proposition 72 will be on the California ballot in November. For more information about the Health Insurance Act of 2003, contact CIWC at 916-448-6762.

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*Address correction requested*