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Bill Implementing Affordable Care Act Consumer Protections Goes to Governor *Sen. Hernandez' Bill Ends Use of Preexisting Condition Exclusions, Excessive Rates*

Sacramento, CA – A bill by Senator Ed Hernandez, O.D. (D – West Covina), Chair of the Senate Health Committee, that would put in place for California the vital consumer protections and reforms included as part of the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA), cleared its final legislative hurdle today and is on its way to the Governor for signature. The legislation, SB X1 2, was introduced as part of the special session on health care called for by Governor Brown during his State of the State Address in January.

“California is leading the way in realizing the promise of President Obama’s landmark health care law, and this bill is the heart of those reforms. People will no longer be denied health care coverage because of a preexisting condition, and their insurance rates will be the same as everyone else” said Hernandez, “I am excited to see this legislation on the Governor’s desk and I am optimistic it will have his support.”

SB X1 2 would implement the key consumer protections of the ACA in California’s individual insurance market, preventing insurance companies and health plans from denying coverage or charging excessive premiums on those who have preexisting health conditions and requiring that insurance premiums be based solely on age, geography, and family size.

“This bill improves access to health coverage for all Californians by preventing insurance companies from engaging in the discriminatory practices and pricing that have kept countless people from getting health coverage” said Hernandez, “People will now be able to purchase health care coverage at the same rate as their neighbors of similar age and family size.”

Since the bill was being introduced as part of a special session of the California Legislature, the legislation would go into effect ninety days after the special session adjourns.

“The full impact and benefits of health care reform will only be felt when as many people as possible have the affordable coverage they need, so I am especially glad to see this bill on a fast track for passage” added Hernandez, “Combined with legislation we are working on to expand Medi-Cal to cover more Californians and a bill that would provide a low-cost, quality health care plan for the working poor, we are moving quickly to increase access to health care for millions of uninsured Californians.”

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