



CALIFORNIA COLLABORATIVE FOR LONG-TERM SERVICES & SUPPORTS (CCLTSS)

March 21, 2019

Honorable Jim Wood
Chair, Health Committee
California State Assembly
Capitol Building, Room 6005
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB 683 (Carrillo)

Dear Assemblymember Wood:

The California Collaborative for Long Term Services and Supports is comprised of 39 statewide aging and disability organizations that promote dignity and independence in long-term living. Our members include advocates, providers, labor and health insurers and collectively we represent millions of California seniors and people with disabilities, their caregivers and those who provide health, human services and housing.

The California Collaborative for Long Term Services and Supports supports AB 683 (Carrillo) to increase the assets limits for Medi-Cal programs serving seniors and persons with disabilities.

The outdated Medi-Cal asset test drives financial instability for seniors in a racially inequitable way. A senior enrolled in the Aged & Disabled Medi-Cal program, is restricted to \$2,000 in a bank account and a couple to \$3,000. These limits have not changed since 1989.

The current asset limit prevents seniors and persons with disabilities from having adequate resources to weather a crisis, such as an eviction, a leaking roof, or a major vehicle repair. When faced with the decision of qualifying for Medi-Cal or having additional savings, most seniors rationally spend down their savings as the cost of their health care is more than they have saved. This puts them at risk of further instability or homelessness when financial crises happen. These rules also disproportionately punish seniors of color because they are more likely to have cash savings, instead of an exempt home.

AB 683 makes three important changes to the Medi-Cal asset rules: (1) it will update the assets limits for programs serving seniors and persons with disabilities to \$10,000 for an individual and an additional \$5,000 for each additional household member, with annual indexing; (2) it will expand and simplify the list of items to be excluded from the assets test for those Medi-Cal programs still subject to the assets test; and (3) it will eliminate the assets test entirely for the Medicare Savings Programs, programs where Medi-Cal pays for an individual's Medicare premiums and co-payments.

The California Collaborative for Long Term Services and Supports respectfully asks for your support of this important legislation to provide equity and stability for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities who are subject to the assets test.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber Christ". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Amber Christ
Vice Chair for Policy
California Collaborative for Long Term Services and Supports