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## **AltaMed**

September 15, 2017

Attorney General Xavier Becerra Office of the Attorney General 1300 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814-2919



## **Re: Cost-sharing Reductions**

Dear Attorney General Becerra:

On behalf of AltaMed Health Services and the 300,000 patients we serve, I write today asking for your support in defending the health care system that we have built together. AltaMed has been providing quality health and human services to individuals and families in Southern California for over 48 years. Each year we serve more than 300,000 individuals and families at 47 sites in Orange and Los Angeles Counties. Our services include a full continuum of care including, complete primary care, dental care, pediatrics obstetrics, gynecology, senior care, HIV services, and youth services.

Since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the number of patients at AltaMed has nearly tripled. This includes a 43% increase in beneficiaries who for the first time in a long time had access to comprehensive primary care and preventive care in their local community. In addition to medical, dental, and mental healthcare, our patients now have peace of mind knowing that they will get the care they need at AltaMed, reaching over 1.2 million encounters annually.

AltaMed opened 2 Health Enrollment Resource Centers in order to assist the community in enrolling in health care insurance through the Exchange, public health programs, Medicaid, and Medicare. The AltaMed Health Enrollment Resource Centers also serve as informational centers where the community can learn about how to use their health insurance, when to go to the Emergency vs. Urgent Care, and what are all their options when it comes to health care coverage. For 3 years in a row AltaMed has been named the #1 enroller in California for our State Exchange, Covered California.

AltaMed works to get individuals enrolled in healthcare plans offered through Covered California, one of the Exchanges established by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. We do so by signing up individuals for health care plans. Since 2014, we have enrolled close to 100,000 individuals in health care plans and Medi-Cal (Medicaid) offered through Covered California.

When premium rates for plans offered through the Exchanges have risen, fewer individuals choose to buy them. Some individuals choose to go without healthcare coverage instead of paying higher rates. Sometimes this is a matter of choice, but sometimes it is a matter of economic necessity—the rise in health care premiums forces some people to choose for paying for health care and paying for other necessities like food and rent.

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Furthermore, when premiums for health care plans offered through the Exchanges rise, some individuals decide not to purchase those plans even if they are eligible for tax credits and other subsidies that would substantially reduce those premiums. Some individuals will decide not to purchase those plans even if their failure to do so means that they will pay a tax penalty.

The Affordable Care Act and Medicaid program are essential to the mission of community health centers and by extension the health of local communities. They ensure access to care for the vulnerable people and communities we both serve. We are asking you to stand up for health and healthcare today.

Sincerely,

Cástulo de la Rocha, J.D.

President & CEO