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March 17, 2022

The Honorable Philip Y. Ting  
Chair, Committee on Budget  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula  
Chair, Budget Sub on Health & Human  
Services  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 5155  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: 2022-2023 Budget Proposal: \$2 Million Broadband and Health Impacts**

Dear Chairmens Ting and Arambula:

As the Legislature identifies budget related expenditures, I am writing to request the inclusion of \$2 million for Insure the Uninsured Project (ITUP). This request seeks a one-time appropriation of \$2 million General Fund dollars for ITUP in conjunction with three partner organizations throughout the state, to comprehensively gather and report back to the Legislature data on the impacts of expanded broadband access on health outcomes. State funding is necessary to ensure that as broadband deployment efforts are made, the state gathers the necessary data and best practices to support these investments.

The measure is sponsored by the Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD), in recognition of the integral part broadband and digital equity play on health outcomes. Insure the Uninsured Project (ITUP) is a recognized health policy convener, educator, and connector organization, with the vision that all Californians should have the opportunity to live their healthiest lives. Over the past 18 months, ITUP has helped bring the health sector into the broadband and digital equity spaces through its work with local and statewide coalitions to achieve better health outcomes and health equity through broadband deployment.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted significant gaps in broadband access throughout California's communities. It has become clear that digital equity, broadband infrastructure, and broadband access impact both urban and rural communities across the state. In an increasingly virtual world, Californians without adequate access to the internet are suffering.

The proposed funding would support:

- The identification of health care partner organizations in at least 3 geographically different regions and assess digital equity needs among their patient populations including: broadband access, infrastructure, device, and digital literacy needs.
- The coordination of data collection to assess the above needs for a given region and patient populations.
- The identification of metrics for evaluation of the impact of expanding connectivity on health care and other quantifiable outcomes which may include, emergency response capability and workforce.
- The development and publication of policy briefs on broadband and digital equity that will include, analysis, case studies of each geographical region, best practices and recommendations on policy and budget solutions around addressing digital equity needs as a social determinant of health.

In the FY 2021-22 Budget Act, California made the largest investment in history for middle (\$3.25 billion) and last mile (\$2.75 billion) broadband projects. Since its enactment, the California Department of Technology has identified the first 18 middle mile projects that will be funded through these investments. Along these initial middle mile projects, there are significant opportunities for the health care system, including health plans, clinics, hospitals, and healthcare districts, to engage ensuring that broadband expansion better the lives and well-beings of the communities they serve.

We are seeking this budget investment of \$2 million to ensure that the already significant investments made in broadband deployment are implemented successfully with an emphasis on outcomes for Californians. The success of this project will result in rich data collection on digital equity barriers to health and health care in California and demonstrate, for the first time in California, beneficial health outcomes and health care cost savings as a result of meaningfully closing gaps in the digital divide.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. Please reach out to my senior legislative assistant, Alice Montes ([Alice.Montes@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Alice.Montes@asm.ca.gov)), if you have any questions or require further background.

Sincerely,



**Cecilia Aguiar-Curry**  
Assemblymember, 4th District

Asm. Aguiar-Curry  
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Cc: Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee  
Andrea Margolis, Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee  
Sarah Bridge, Association of California Healthcare Districts