

April 28, 2023

Assemblymember Jim Wood
Chair, Assembly Committee on Health
1020 N Street, Suite 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for AB 1085 (Maienschein)

Dear Chair Wood:

On behalf of MidPen Housing Corporation, I am writing to support AB 1085 (Maienschein), which would require the Department of Healthcare Services to seek federal approval to make housing support services a Medi-Cal benefit.

MidPen Housing is one of the nation's leading nonprofit developers, owners, and managers of high-quality, affordable housing and onsite resident services. Since MidPen was founded in 1970, we have developed over 125 communities and 8,500 homes for low-income families, seniors and those with supportive housing needs throughout Northern California.

Homelessness dramatically impacts health outcomes, costs, and access to care. Health costs for Medicaid beneficiaries experiencing chronic homelessness can add up to over \$100,000 in one year. Despite this high spending, people experiencing chronic homelessness die, on average, 25-30 years younger than housed people with similar health conditions.

Studies show housing support services help people access housing and health stability and meaningful care. These services include the following:

- Housing transition & navigation services to connect people to housing;
- Housing deposits to help people access a place to live, such as security deposits; and
- Housing tenancy and sustaining services to help people maintain leases, connect to community supports they need, and gain employment if able to work.

Currently, Medi-Cal plans can choose to provide housing support services as a Community Support, resulting in different eligibility requirements and standards, even in the same county. A statewide Medi-Cal benefit would be more equitable and available to Medi-Cal enrollees who are experiencing homelessness. A benefit would allow California to scale up provision of services and make services available for as long as the enrollee needs the services. A benefit would allow California to take advantage of a federal match of up to a 90% (for the expansion population).

Two years ago, DHCS [shared an intent](#) is to make housing support services a Medi-Cal benefit for Californians experiencing homelessness by 2024. Since then, DHCS has made significant investment to build a statewide network of providers with capacity to offer culturally competent housing support services.



As a next step toward offering meaningful, person-centered health care to people experiencing homelessness, AB 1085 (Maienschein) would require DHCS to seek federal approval for a Medi-Cal housing support services benefit in 2024. Setting a deadline will drive plans to develop their capacity and providers to participate, improve health outcomes among Californians experiencing homelessness, reduce homelessness, standardize eligibility, and draw down millions of federal dollars that we are currently not accessing.

For these reasons, we urge your support for AB 1085.

Sincerely,

Matthew O. Franklin
President and CEO
MidPen Housing Corporation

cc:

Nevada V. Merriman, Director of Policy, MidPen Housing
Senator Mike McGuire
Senator Bill Dodd
Senator Susan Eggman
Senator Steve Glazer
Senator Nancy Skinner
Senator Aisha Wahab
Senator Josh Becker
Senator Dave Cortese
Senator John Laird
Senator Alex Padilla
Senator Diane Feinstein
Assemblymember Jim Wood
Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
Assemblymember Lori Wilson
Assemblymember Damon Connolly
Assemblymember Phil Ting
Assemblymember Matt Haney
Assemblymember Mia Bonta
Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Assemblymember Liz Ortega
Assemblymember Diane Papan
Assemblymember Marc Berman
Assemblymember Alex Lee
Assemblymember Evan Low



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Assemblymember Ash Kalra
Assemblymember Gail Pellerin
Assemblymember Robert Rivas
Assemblymember Dawn Addis