

March 31, 2025

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8140
Sacramento CA 95814

The Honorable Catherine Stefani
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5220
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: AB 804 (Wicks, Stefani) – Medi-Cal Housing Support Services Benefit – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymembers Wicks and Stefani:

MidPen Housing is pleased to write to you in support of your bill AB 315, 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 139 communities and over 10,000 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).

In 2021, DHCS [shared an intent](#) is to make housing support services a Medi-Cal benefit for Californians experiencing homelessness. 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 804 (Wicks and Stefani) would require DHCS to seek federal approval for a Medi-Cal housing support services benefit in 2026 for 2027 effective date. 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.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact Nevada V. Merriman, Vice President of Policy & Advocacy, at 650-477-6195 or nmerriman@midpen-housing.org

Best Regards,



Matthew O. Franklin
President and CEO

CC: Nevada V. Merriman, Vice President of Policy & Advocacy, MidPen Housing