



March 26, 2024

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear
California State Senate District 38
1021 O Street, Suite 7340
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1236 (Blakespear) Medicare supplement coverage: open enrollment period - Support

Dear Senator Blakespear,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write in support of SB 1236, which will establish a right to guaranteed issue for all Medicare patients seeking Medigap supplemental coverage. In addition, the bill creates an annual open enrollment period.

Medigap is a health insurance policy that helps cover costs that traditional or “fee-for-service” Medicare do not cover. Medigap works as an extra insurance plan alongside Medicare Parts A and B, helping to cover various out-of-pocket expenses such as deductibles, copayments, and co-insurance. This is especially important for patients that have higher than average healthcare needs and face high out-of-pocket costs.

Comprehensive guaranteed issue in the Medigap insurance market can help patients better afford their care. Currently, the situations in which statutory guaranteed issue protections for Medigap apply are limited. This means that Medigap companies can charge patients who do not qualify for guaranteed issue much higher rates based on age and health or can deny patients coverage outright. There are many situations where Medicare patients may need to switch their healthcare coverage, and these patients should be given access to coverage they can afford, regardless of their preexisting conditions.

For these reasons, CSAP is pleased to support SB 1236.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yoder', is positioned below the 'Sincerely,' text.

Paul Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Chair and Members, Assembly Health Committee