

How Medicare for All California will help City/County Governments

Escalating health care costs, including retiree health benefits, strain the budgets of California's city and county governments. The result? Increases in sales taxes, layoff of government employees, and the neglect of local services like road repair, maintenance of parks and recreation areas, all of which contribute to an environment of unease.

County governments, responsible for the mental and physical health of uninsured or underinsured residents face sometimes insurmountable burdens on their health and human services programs.

And then there is the 800 pound gorilla, California's unfunded retiree health benefits that city, county and state governments would like to ignore but that will need to be paid one day. As more and more state and local workers retire and those benefits come due, who will pay the bill? Taxpayers.

Medicare for All California wouldn't completely eliminate this problem, which was created over many years by politicians pandering for special interest support. It would, however, go a long way to easing the stress, enrolling all retirees into one California risk pool.

There would be no more need to worry about what level of employee health insurance it could offer. Local budgets would benefit from the savings brought by a Medicare for All California health system, which would include lower and predictable costs. Retirees would still be able to negotiate with their previous employers over what share, if any, of their health tax would be picked up by the local or state government.

We can end the control that the health insurance industry and Big Pharma have on our health care and put Californians and their doctors in charge. We can do this with Medicare for All California.

