

The California Alliance of Child and Family Services is a statewide association dedicated to advancing the well-being of children, youth, and families—particularly those from marginalized populations, such as communities of color, LGBTQ+ youth, and families navigating systemic barriers. Representing a diverse network of nonprofit agencies, our members provide critical services in foster care, behavioral health, juvenile justice, and more.

Our 2025 policy priorities platform centers on expanding access to crucial services for these communities, including behavioral health care and housing affordability, while advancing the sustainability of the community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve them. In addition to our sponsored legislation, the CA Alliance is committed to continue advancing our administrative advocacy efforts, in collaboration with partners, to transform our child welfare and behavioral health systems, protect health care access for all, and strengthen investments. The CA Alliance will continue to be a champion in advocating for equitable and sustainable solutions that propel a safe environment for every child and family in California to access the tools and resources needed to thrive.

### **Addressing CA's Child Welfare Insurance Crisis**

The California insurance crisis, characterized by rising premiums, limited coverage options, and market instability, significantly threatens the stability and well-being of children, families and the organizations that serve them. Most immediately, 9,700 foster children are at risk of being displaced and losing support from foster families if foster family agencies (FFAs) are forced to close their doors due to the dramatic increase in the cost of premiums for liability insurance. Unfortunately, the insurance crisis is likely to impact other industries that serve at risk youth, including Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTPs) and Wraparound programs. We must address the insurance crisis in California with urgency.

The CA Alliance is committed to addressing this issue by:

- Working in collaboration with members to collect data and testimonials to demonstrate the extent of the insurance crisis.
- Working with partners to explore coalition efforts aimed at finding solutions for the FFA insurance crisis.
- Continuing to work with the state departments and agencies to obtain their support in finding and implementing viable solutions.
- Engaging the media to spread awareness of the issue and gather public support
- Sponsoring a budget bill to create a state pool of funds for FFA sustainability.

### **Expanding CA's Workforce by Removing Barriers to Employment**

With increasing demands for behavioral health services, the CA Alliance is committed to removing systemic barriers that impede organizations' ability to create a robust workforce that meets the needs of children and families, including accessing timely and culturally competent care. By investing in this expansion, we can enhance the resilience of families, improve outcomes for children, and foster healthier communities.

The CA Alliance is committed to building a stronger workforce by:

- Supporting the expansion and financial sustainability of frontline healthcare workers, including peers, wellness coaches and community health workers (CHWs).
- Sponsoring legislation to remove delays in obtaining responses to out-of-state background checks.
- Removing barriers for organizations, like Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs, to employ formerly criminally involved individuals who have been rehabilitated to lend their life experience to serve foster youth as peers, wellness coaches and CHWs.

### **Supporting Sustainability for Organizations Serving Foster Children and Families**

Supporting the financial sustainability of organizations serving the child welfare system, such as Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) and Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs), is essential for the ongoing care and stability of marginalized children and families.

The CA Alliance is committed to supporting members by:

- Continuing to support member's compliance with the *Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA)*, while working with partners and the Attorney General's Office to potentially explore avenues for possible nonprofit exemptions.
- Informing the Legislature, Governor's Office and administration of our *concerns regarding the California Alliance for Child and Family Services' (CANS) tiered rate structure* and helping shape implementation to ensure the needs of foster children are met by properly compensating the families and the organizations that support them.
- Continue to *influence the implementation of CalAIM, the Behavioral Health Services Act, and other behavioral health initiatives*, to protect and expand investments for children and family services, while ensuring the delivery of services are sensitive to cultural differences and language needs.
- Supporting advocacy efforts to *address issues with presumptive transfer*, including payment delays, placement confusion, and contracting hurdles.

### **Protecting & Expanding Behavioral Healthcare Access for Children & Families**

Ensuring consistent access to health care for children and youth remains a critical priority for our organization. Many young individuals and families face systemic barriers to obtaining timely, equitable, and high-quality behavioral and social services, disproportionately impacting communities of color and LGBTQ+. These gaps can result in delayed care, worsening health outcomes, and increased long-term societal costs.

The CA Alliance is committed to protecting and expanding behavioral healthcare services by:

- Supporting legislation and partner efforts to *address ghost directories and networks*.
- *Joining state advisory committees & councils* tasked with providing guidance to the state on their behavioral health initiatives that direct resources for California's behavioral health system.
- *Balancing financial responsibility between payor types in California's health system*, including more equitable involvement of commercial insurance plans in funding behavioral health services.
- Exploring *how STRTPs can continue to provide aftercare services* under a high-fidelity wraparound.
- *Increasing our federal advocacy* to ensure funding for healthcare services and the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) continues.

### **Increasing our Federal Advocacy: Defending and Advancing Equity and Justice for Youth and Families**

The Trump administration has introduced policies that impact efforts to promote DEI in workplaces and educational institutions while also attempting to remove rights that marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ immigrants, have fought to obtain.

The CA Alliance is committed to Advancing Equity and Justice along with the rights of marginalized communities by:

- Working with federal partners to *advocate against policies impacting the livelihood of marginalized communities*, including LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, and at-risk youth while *protecting DEI policies*.
- *Protecting California's Medi-Cal expansion afforded through the Affordable Care Act (ACA)* by advocating against policies that attempt to repeal the Act or reduce federal funding for California's Medi-Cal program.
- *Protecting funding allocated to the wellbeing of children and families*, including the Family First Prevention Services Act.
- *Advocating against policies that would negatively impact our educational system*, including removal of federal funds, limiting behavioral health services in schools, or removing education regarding DEI.