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April 14, 2021

City of San Jose
Rules and Open Government Committee
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Subject: Item G.4 - Assembly Bill 1400: Guaranteed Healthcare for All

Dear Chair Jones and Committee Members,

I would like to respectfully ask for your support for Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco's memorandum to adopt a position of support for AB 1400 on guaranteed Health Care for All to be agendaized for City Council on April 27th.

Many of us proclaim that healthcare is a human right. However, our policies do not match that proclamation as millions of Californians either have no health insurance or are under-insured, leading to self-rationing due to high deductibles and co-pays. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed long-standing inequities in our healthcare system and has even exacerbated them.

I introduced AB 1400, which puts forth a single-payer style healthcare system for California, because our healthcare system should revolve around the needs of people and not profits. Currently, Americans are paying by far more for healthcare than anywhere else in the world. Yet, we are far from having the best health outcomes. In fact, the United States ranks 35th in life expectancy and from 2019 to 2020, black life expectancy dropped 2.7 years and Latino life expectancy dropped 1.9 years. In San Jose, especially in our communities in East San Jose, we are witnessing the failure of a system that ties healthcare to employment. AB 1400 would provide healthcare to all residents of California regardless of employment, age, sex, or immigration status. In addition, a single-payer program as being proposed would be dramatically less expensive than our current multi-payer healthcare system. San Jose can be on the right side of history by standing in support of AB 1400.

Truly universal healthcare is not impossible, but it does require political will. Bringing single-payer healthcare to our residents in San Jose and all Californians will not be easy. But, we are not tasked to simply follow the path of least resistance if it means thousands of our residents will continue to struggle and suffer. It would be an honor to have the city in which I reside and care deeply about support our movement to bring healthcare to all. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ASH KALRA