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## Why Underserved Communities Oppose Prop 23, the Dangerous & Costly Dialysis Proposition

Prop 23 Jeopardizes the Lives of Low-Income Dialysis Patients, Reduces Access to Doctors & Increases Health Care Costs for All

The California State Conference of the NAACP, Latino Diabetes Association, Minority Health Institute, American Nurses Association\California, California Medical Association, patient advocates, health care advocates and underserved communities all strongly OPPOSE Prop 23 - the special interest proposition that would seriously jeopardize access to care for tens of thousands of underserved Californians who need regular dialysis treatment to stay alive, make our state's physician shortage and ER overcrowding worse, all while increasing health care costs by hundreds of millions annually. Here are the facts:



### Prop 23 disproportionately impacts patients of color who have higher rates of kidney failure.

- ▶ According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease, **African Americans are 3.5 times more likely and Latinxs are 1.5 times more likely to develop kidney failure** and need dialysis treatment to stay alive.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ According to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services, at the end of 2017, California had the highest number of dialysis patients in the nation.<sup>2</sup> African Americans and Hispanics made up 57% of patients on dialysis.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Prop 23 **hurts the poorest and most vulnerable individuals in our communities** by reducing access to the care they need to stay alive.



### Prop 23 would force community dialysis clinics to cut services and close - putting the lives of vulnerable dialysis patients at serious risk.

- ▶ Nearly 80,000 Californians with failed kidneys receive dialysis treatment three days a week, four hours at a time to stay alive. Dialysis treatment does the job of the kidneys by removing toxins from the body. Missing a single treatment increases patient risk of death by 30%.
- ▶ Prop 23 would force dialysis clinics to have a physician administrator on site at all times, even though they would not be involved in patient care.
- ▶ According to a study by the independent Berkeley Research Group, Prop 23 would increase dialysis treatment costs by \$320 million every year.
- ▶ Nearly half of the 600 clinics in California would become financially unsustainable - resulting in clinic closures and cutbacks that would dangerously jeopardize access to dialysis care that these patients need to survive.



"Prop 23 will disproportionately hurt patients of color and those in disadvantaged and low-income communities."

Alice Huffman, President,  
California State Conference of  
the NAACP

"Every dialysis patient is under the care of a physician kidney specialist, and dialysis treatments are administered by specially-trained nurses and technicians. It makes no sense to require physician administrators on site full-time."

Jeffrey A. Perlmutter, MD,  
President, Renal Physicians  
Association, representing  
3,500 kidney doctors

1. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/kidney-disease>

2. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) which regulates dialysis clinics nationwide. Data covers patients, regardless of insurer as of 12/31/17. <https://data.cms.gov/>

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## Prop 23 would make our physician shortage worse and lead to more emergency room overcrowding.

- ▶ Prop 23 would take thousands of doctors away from caring for patients - making our physician shortage worse and forcing all Californians to wait longer to see our doctors.
- ▶ And, because Prop 23 would force many dialysis clinics to shut down, dialysis patients will get very ill without regular treatments and wind up in the emergency room. Sending tens of thousands of vulnerable patients to emergency rooms will exacerbate emergency room overcrowding and reduce capacity to deal with other emergencies and pandemics like the coronavirus.

“Proposition 23 would take thousands of doctors away from hospitals and clinics - where they’re needed - and place them into bureaucratic jobs at dialysis clinics where they aren’t. This is not the time to make our physician shortage worse.”

**Peter N. Bretan, MD,**  
President, California  
Medical Association



## Prop 23 Increases Health Care Costs for Struggling Californians.

- ▶ At a time when our economy is in crisis and families are struggling to make ends meet, a dramatic increase in health care costs would be a real burden for many California families.
- ▶ California’s independent, nonpartisan Legislative Analyst warns Prop 23 would result in “Increased state and local health care costs ... resulting from increased dialysis treatment costs.”
- ▶ That will increase costs for all of us in the form of higher insurance premiums and higher taxes for government-sponsored health care.
- ▶ Prop 23 is an irresponsible attack on low-income Californians who are already struggling to make ends meet.



## Prop 23 is unnecessary. Dialysis clinics are strictly regulated and provide high quality care.

- ▶ The federal and state governments already extensively regulate dialysis clinics. According to the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, California dialysis clinics outperform other states in clinical quality and patient satisfaction.



## Prop 23 is the worst kind of special interest ballot box abuse that uses patients as pawns.

- ▶ The Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW) spent \$23 million in 2018 trying to pass a similar dialysis ballot measure (Prop 8), and voters overwhelmingly rejected that deeply flawed proposition.
- ▶ Now, they’re at it again, pushing another harmful proposition that puts dialysis patient lives at risk. Especially now, in the face of a public health crisis, it’s not right that special interests are playing political games with our healthcare system and putting patient lives at risk.



## Prop 23 is opposed by:

- California State Conference NAACP
- Latino Diabetes Association
- Minority Health Institute
- California Medical Association
- American Nurses Association\California
- Chronic Disease Coalition
- Renal Support Network
- Dialysis Patient Citizens
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- Network of Ethnic Physician Organizations
- American Academy of Nephrology PAs
- Renal Physicians Association
- Women Voters Alliance
- California Senior Advocates League
- California Taxpayer Protection Committee
- Latin Business Association (partial list)

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