STATE OF CALIFORNIA--HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY

PETE WILSON, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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February 28, 1997

TO: All County Welfare Directors
All County Administrative Officers
All County Medi-Cal Program Specialists/Liaisons

Letter No.: 97-08

CONTINUED MEDI-CAL BENEFITS FOR LEGAL IMMIGRANTS RESIDING IN CALIFORNIA PRIOR TO AUGUST 22, 1996

The purpose of this letter is to inform counties that Governor Pete Wilson has decided to extend Medi-Cal benefits to legal immigrants and refugees who were residing in California before August 22, 1996. Under HR 3734, qualified aliens who do not meet certain exemption criteria can have their level of benefits determined by the State. Governor Wilson has determined that these legal immigrants and refugees, if otherwise eligible, may receive Medi-Cal benefits at the level they were receiving/entitled prior to August 22, 1996. At this time, there is no change in existing regulations or procedures for determining their eligibility. The Department of Health Services (Department) does not anticipate any changes in their eligibility for Medi-Cal prior to July 1, 1997.

There are a number of other issues and options under consideration as part of the process of implementing HR 3734. We will be consulting with county staff to determine the best ways to implement these changes with minimal disruption in the delivery of Medi-Cal benefits. We will advise you as decisions are made regarding these issues.

The Department is also working closely with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to transition individuals affected by SSI changes. Department of Social Services' current estimate of the number of SSI aliens expected to be terminated is approximately 87,000. SSA plans to stagger the suspensions over a two-month period with terminations beginning in August/September 1997.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter, you may contact Ms. Marlene King for questions on legal immigrants at (916) 657-0134 and Ms. Elena Lara for questions on refugees at (916) 657-0712.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

FRANK S. MARTUCCI, CHIEF
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch