



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 07 2023

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 694 without my signature.

This bill would require self-measured blood pressure devices and related services to be covered benefits within the Medi-Cal program.

While I appreciate the author's goal to support Medi-Cal beneficiaries with hypertension and related conditions, new Medi-Cal benefits must be considered as part of the annual budget process. In 2022, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) added coverage for self-measured blood pressure devices into the Medi-Cal pharmacy benefit. However, the addition of patient education, data collection, and required communication about treatment plans is an expansion of covered services. DHCS estimates additional annual costs to the Medi-Cal program in the millions of dollars from the General Fund to implement this bill. These costs must be considered alongside other budgetary priorities.

In partnership with the Legislature, we enacted a budget that closed a shortfall of more than \$30 billion through balanced solutions that avoided deep program cuts and protected education, health care, climate, public safety, and social service programs that are relied on by millions of Californians. This year, however, the Legislature sent me bills outside of this budget process that, if all enacted, would add nearly \$19 billion of unaccounted costs in the budget, of which \$11 billion would be ongoing.

With our state facing continuing economic risk and revenue uncertainty, it is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications, such as this measure.



For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gavin Newsom', written over the printed name. The signature is stylized and extends horizontally across the page.