

Fresno Supervisors To Determine Fate Of Health Care For The Undocumented

By Diana Aguilera

After months of uncertainty, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors will decide on Tuesday the future of health care for its undocumented community.

The board has two options. They can accept or reject a deal from the state to defer the county's payment of \$5.5 million for road funds in exchange of continuing to provide specialty care for the medically indigent.

Fresno County has been in a long-running contract with Community Regional Medical Center, which the county pays about \$20 million a year to CRMC to cover these services. But with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act the county says it's receiving less state funding for its medical safety-net program and can't afford to continue offering care for undocumented people. In August, the county voted to end its contract with CRMC which takes effect on December 1.

If the county accepts the deal, it would give them an additional five years to pay the debt back to the state. But the deal can only be reached if Fresno County uses the money to continue specialty care for the indigent. This refers to coverage for treatments including cancer, diabetes and heart disease. If the county were to accept, its obligation to continue services is only until that money runs out.



Either way Fresno County's undocumented population can still receive emergency services and can get primary care at community health centers.

On Tuesday the board will have to decide whether to accept the deal, and continue services, or pay its \$5.5 million debt back to the state.

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