

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 8, 2025

**SENATE BILL**

**No. 338**

---

**Introduced by Senator Becker**

February 12, 2025

---

An act to add Chapter 3.9 (commencing with Section 18249) to Part 6 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 338, as amended, Becker. Mobile Health for Rural Communities Pilot Program.

Existing law establishes various programs to address the needs of migrant agricultural families. Existing law also provides funding to enhance and maintain rural health services.

This bill would establish the Mobile Health for Rural Communities Pilot Program, and require the State Department of Health Care Services to administer the program to expand access to health services for farmworkers in rural communities. *The bill would authorize the department to work with a community organization, including Ayudando Latinos a Soñar or other community foundations, to assist in the administration of the program.* The bill would require the department, among other things, to deploy mobile units, as defined, in 2 rural ~~counties~~ *communities* based on farmworker population and access to health care. Under the bill, the mobile units would include, at a minimum, computers, Wi-Fi, cubicles for virtual visits, and exam rooms for telemedicine. The bill would require the department, on or before January 1, 2027, to report the outcomes of the program to the Legislature. *The bill would create the Farmworkers Health Equity Fund*

*and would condition implementation of these provisions on no General Fund moneys being used.*

The bill would make findings and declarations in support of its provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 *(a) It is the intent of the Legislature to model this pilot program*  
4 *after the successful Farmworker Health Equity Express Bus*  
5 *program, which launched in 2022, visiting farms in and around*  
6 *the Half Moon Bay community to expand access to health services*  
7 *for farm workers.*

8 *(b) The Health Equity Express Bus was facilitated through a*  
9 *community partnership between Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS)*  
10 *and Life Science Cares Bay Area.*

11 *(c) The Farmworker Health Equity Express Bus was also made*  
12 *possible by grant contributions and donations from the Gilead*  
13 *Foundation, Genentech, and Abbvie.*

14 *(d) ALAS is a Latino centered nonprofit organization dedicated*  
15 *to advocating for the farmworker and Latino community.*

16 *(e) Life Science Cares Bay Area is a nonprofit organization that*  
17 *finds ways for the local Life Science industry to collectively address*  
18 *the impact of poverty on its neighbors.*

19 *(f) The Farmworker Health Equity Express Bus was a shared*  
20 *vision between ALAS, Life Science Cares, Gilead, and Genentech*  
21 *to:*

22 *(1) Support farmworker communities in achieving equitable*  
23 *outcomes around health care, education, and economic*  
24 *development.*

25 *(2) Acquire education that can help other communities replicate*  
26 *or improve on this program.*

27 *(3) Augment the reach of existing programs available to the*  
28 *broader community and enable access to farmworker communities.*

29 ~~(a)~~

30 *(g) The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*  
31 *(CDC) indicate that Latino Americans are more likely to have type*

1 2 diabetes versus non-Latino whites. The CDC also reports that  
2 Latinos have poorly controlled high blood pressure compared to  
3 non-Latino whites.

4 (b)

5 (h) The National Institutes of Health report that Latinos are  
6 three times as likely to get COVID-19 and twice as likely to die  
7 of COVID-19 than the general population.

8 (e)

9 (i) A survey by the UC Merced Community and Labor Center  
10 of over 1,200 California farmworkers between 2021 and 2022  
11 produced all of the following key findings from respondents:

12 (1) Forty-nine percent reported being without health insurance.

13 (2) Forty-three percent reported visiting a doctor's clinic in the  
14 last year, and 39 percent had been seen by a dentist.

15 (3) Over one-third reported that their health was "fair" or "poor."

16 (4) Between one-third and one-half reported having at least one  
17 chronic condition, and the most common reported conditions were  
18 diabetes, hypertension, and anxiety.

19 (5) Forty percent of respondents suspected or confirmed being  
20 infected with COVID-19, and of those who tested positive, 41  
21 percent said their health had not returned to normal.

22 (d)

23 (j) A survey from San Mateo County Health shows that common  
24 reasons cited by farmworkers struggling to access health care were  
25 lack of transportation and fear that taking time off from work would  
26 lead to losing their jobs.

27 (e)

28 (k) A survey from the Public Policy Institute of California found  
29 that the cost of care or lack of health insurance were other  
30 commonly cited reasons farmworkers may not seek the health care  
31 they need.

32 (f)

33 (l) Around 25 percent of households with farmworker income  
34 fall below the poverty line.

35 (g)

36 (m) Farmworkers tend to have low levels of formal education  
37 with about 74 percent reporting that they did not complete high  
38 school. The average level of formal education completed by a  
39 California farmworker is the eighth grade.

40 (h)

(n) According to the Public Policy Institute of California, about 97 percent of California farmworkers are Latino with 44 percent reporting that they do not speak or read English at all and 89 percent reporting that Spanish is their primary language.

~~(i)~~

(o) California has over 72,000 students, 3 to 21 years of age, inclusive, who are eligible to participate in the federal Migrant Education Program.

~~(j)~~

(p) These students, largely children of farmworkers, have a four-year graduation rate that is 5 percent lower than the statewide rate, according to the State Department of Education.

~~(k)~~

(q) Data from the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress shows that these students score consistently lower on state standardized tests. For instance, during the 2022–23 school year, about 47 percent of all students met or exceeded English or language arts standards, while only about 24 percent of migrant students met or exceeded English or language arts standards. Nearly 35 percent met or exceeded math standards, with about 15 percent of migrant students reaching that threshold.

SEC. 2. Chapter 3.9 (commencing with Section 18249) is added to Part 6 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

CHAPTER 3.9. MOBILE HEALTH FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES  
PILOT PROGRAM

18249. There is the Mobile Health for Rural Communities Pilot Program.

18249.2. The following definitions shall apply to this chapter:

(a) “Department” means the State Department of Health Care Services.

(b) “Mobile unit” means a vehicle or portable facility that is equipped with, at a minimum, computers, Wi-Fi, cubicles for virtual visits, and exam rooms for telemedicine.

(c) “Program” means the Mobile Health for Rural Communities Pilot Program established by this chapter.

18249.4. (a) The department shall administer the program to expand access to health services for farmworkers in rural

1 communities by providing virtual connections to health care  
2 providers, mental health services, and educational services to help  
3 improve health outcomes in underserved communities.

4 *(b) The department may work with a community organization,*  
5 *including Ayudando Latinos a Soñar or other community*  
6 *foundations, to assist in the administration of the program.*

7 18249.5. *(a) The Farmworkers Health Equity Fund is hereby*  
8 *created in the State Treasury.*

9 *(b) The department shall fund the implementation of this chapter*  
10 *with funding other than General Fund moneys, including gifts,*  
11 *donations, bequests, or grants of funds from private sources and*  
12 *public agencies, designated for any of the purposes of this chapter*  
13 *and deposited in the Farmworkers Health Equity Fund.*

14 *(c) This chapter shall be implemented only if no General Fund*  
15 *moneys are used for this chapter.*

16 18249.6. (a) The department shall deploy mobile units in two  
17 rural ~~counties~~ communities based on farmworker population and  
18 access to health care.

19 (b) The department shall make space available in or around  
20 mobile units that can be used for visits by professionals, including,  
21 but not limited to, medical teams, educators, and volunteers, who  
22 bring additional programming onsite to rural farms.

23 18249.8. On or before January 1, 2027, the department shall  
24 report the outcomes of the program to the Legislature. The report  
25 shall comply with the requirements of Section 9795 of the  
26 Government Code.