Xavier Becerra in His Own Words: ‘Health Care Is a Right’

He would be the nation’s first Latino HHS secretary.

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President-elect Joe Biden has tapped California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to lead the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Becerra, who would be the nation’s first Latino HHS secretary, has taken some ground-breaking positions on health care, especially since he became attorney general in 2017.

He has sued the Trump administration dozens of times on health care, birth control, immigration, climate change and more, with California leading the defense of the Affordable Care Act before the U.S. Supreme Court. Becerra has also won a major legal settlement from Sutter Health after accusing the nonprofit health care giant of using its market dominance in Northern California to illegally drive up prices.

Becerra told Kaiser Health News (KHN) last year that his views have been shaped by his experience as the son of Mexican immigrants. Describing his mother’s miscarriage, he said that everyone should be able to go to the doctor: “For me, health care is a right,” he said. “I’ve been a single-payer advocate all my life.”

Here’s more of what he told KHN about his views on health care in the past few years:

Early last year, Becerra told Samantha Young, California Healthline’s state politics correspondent, about his experience as the child of immigrants, and how that shaped his legal and political career.

Becerra joined KHN chief Washington correspondent Julie Rovner on her “What the Health?” podcast two years ago about his emphasis on health care as attorney general.

Last month, Becerra spoke with Samantha Young about his defense of the Affordable Care Act before the U.S. Supreme Court.

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