

January 31, 2011

To receive **Health Matters** electronically, send your contact information to info@chc-inc.org or sign up on our website at www.chc-inc.org.

Affordable Care Act Updates: Still the Law

On January 19th, the United States House of Representatives voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act by passing HR2 “Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law.” The bill received a final vote of 245 in favor (all 242 Republicans joined by three Democrats) and 189 opposed. It now heads to the US Senate where it is unlikely to garner the same support as in the House. In addition, President Obama has already promised to veto the bill in the unlikely event that it reaches his desk.

Despite the passage of HR2 by the house, Affordable Care Act (ACA) is still the law. The administration continues to push forward with implementation of the ACA and at the same time health advocates address the concerns raised in HR 2 around job growth and government spending. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that repealing the March 2010 law would add about \$230 billion to the federal budget deficit over the next ten years. The CBO also looked at the claim that the ACA would cause health insurance premiums to go up for businesses and found that health reform would cause premiums to go down for most companies.

California Leads the Nation

On a state level, California has indicated it will continue with implementation efforts. California was the first state in the country to enact legislation creating a health insurance exchange under federal health reform in September 2010. Prior to leaving office, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger also made his two appointments to the statewide Insurance Exchange Board: Susan Kennedy (his former Chief of Staff) and Kim Belshé (former Secretary of Health and Human Services). Diane Dooley, who was appointed the new Secretary of Health and Human Services, will also serve on the Board. The Assembly and Senate have yet to make their appointments.

CHC Health Reform Webinar

Community Health Councils continues its advocacy and educational campaign on health reform with the second installment in its webinar series “Closing the Gap: Making the Most of Health Reform.”

The second session “*Patient-Centered Medical Homes*” will take place February 9, 2011 from 10-11:30am. This webinar will address the differences between how our current safety net functions and the medical home model, ways to track the progress and success of the model, local initiatives to help clinics become medical homes and how patients are being prepared and educated for the transition.

For more information or to register, visit the health reform page on our website at www.chc-inc.org/health-reform or contact Laura Ewing, CHC Policy Analyst at 323.295.9372 x228 laura@chc-inc.org.

State Budget Calls for Deep Cuts & Few Revenue Solutions

Governor Jerry Brown released his 2011-2012 budget proposal on January 10th. With the state facing a \$25.4 billion state deficit, the Governor’s budget continues the practice of solving years of inadequate strategic and fiscal planning through program cuts to the safety net for low-income children and families. The Governor’s budget includes revenue proposals that would generate about \$12 billion for the state, but the current economy necessitates a larger effort to protect the economic and health safety net for Californians through permanent revenue solutions.

Revenue Strategies

The Governor’s revenue solutions include:

- A 5-year extension of current tax levels (on sales tax, vehicle license fee, personal income tax, and dependent credit deduction) subject to voter approval on a revenue ballot measure for June.
- Ending special tax credits for enterprise zones
- Eliminating one major corporate loophole that allows big corporations to choose which tax they want to pay (elective single sales factor).

Additional budget strategies include:

- Diverting \$1 billion from Prop 10 (First 5) to pay for Medi-Cal services (ballot approval)
- Shifting \$861.2 million in Prop 63 to fund mental health services including Early Periodic Screening Detection and Treatment (EPSDT).

The proposed revenue strategies jeopardize funding for one needed program for another and do not do enough to protect health and human services for the neediest Californians. Advocates are calling on Governor Brown to explore additional revenue options including oil severance taxes, redesign of Prop 13 and other corporate tax loopholes.

Expenditure Reductions

The revenue strategies are countered by \$12.5 billion in proposed expenditure reductions. The reductions push families further into poverty, widen the equity gap for those relying on public programs and create a two-tiered system of care in California by:

- Limiting doctor visits and prescriptions
- Imposing healthcare cost sharing for emergency rooms and hospital
- Eliminating vision benefits for over 800,000 children
- Decreasing state and federal funding for Cal-Works, blocking a move towards self-sufficiency for more than 100,000 families
- Cutting In-Home Support Services, K-12 education, mental health services, community colleges and much more.

In his State of the State address today, Governor Brown reminded us that California is still a very rich economy. While Californians struggle through a slow economic recovery, we need our legislators to tap into that wealth to keep billions of dollars circulating through the economy. We can do this by raising revenue to maintain programs that can help children and families bounce back; reinvesting in our educational systems to prepare our future workforce, innovators and entrepreneurs; creating jobs and growing the green industry that also rebuilds the state's transportation and utility systems.

Baldwin Hills Oil Field: Renewed Commitments

A standing room only crowd consisting of Baldwin Hills and Culver City residents gathered at Kenneth Hahn State Park on January 27, 2011 to hear Supervisor Mark

Ridley-Thomas provide an update on his 2009 motion to initiate a study to consider amendments to the existing Community Standards District that regulates the oil field. It has been 17 months since the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the motion with no report of study activity.

The Supervisor re-iterated his belief that maximum benefits for the community would come from settlement conversations his office has been mediating since 2008. Despite calls by some residents for the Supervisor to take a dual approach — following through with the CSD study and continuing settlement negotiations — Supervisor Ridley-Thomas asserted his efforts have focused on bringing the various parties involved to the settlement conversations.

While many residents criticized the lack of results and length of time the settlement talks were taking, the Supervisor underscored his commitment to arrive at a solution and communicate his efforts to stakeholders more frequently. To address residents' concerns with pressing health conditions and urgent air quality issues, he promised to involve the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) regulatory agency at the next meeting.

There was no indication that the Supervisor would take actions outside of settlement conversations as promised in the August 2009 motion.

One week earlier, more than 40 residents of Baldwin Hills and Culver City gathered at the Ladera soccer field overlooking the oil field to commemorate five years of commitment to advocacy for the health and safety of oil drilling activities. January 9th marked the fifth anniversary of the release of noxious gases from the oil field that caused area residents to evacuate their homes in the middle of the night.

For more information, contact Bethany Ulrich at 323.295.9372 x216 or via email at Bethany@chc-inc.org.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ... CONTACT
COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS,
323.295.9372. INFO@CHC-INC.ORG.**