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## Governor Proposes Steep Cuts to Close Growing Deficit

Signaling a desperate situation, Governor Schwarzenegger took the unprecedented step of releasing his 2009-10 Budget Proposal ten days before the deadline. The Governor proposes closing a more than \$40 billion budget deficit through harsh cuts in health, education, and human services; temporary and permanent tax increases; and new borrowing to address the shortfall.

### *Cuts to Healthcare*

The Governor has proposed severe cuts to health and human services programs including large cuts to the Medi-Cal Program, for state savings of \$50.8 million in 2008-09 and \$668.7 million in 2009-10. Most of these proposals are recycled and were rejected by the Legislature in 2008.

Specific proposals include:

- Eliminating optional benefits for adults including dental, optometry, podiatry, and psychology services
- Restricting eligibility for low-income parents with children by reducing the maximum income to pre-2000 levels and requiring that the principal wage earner work less than 100 hours per month
- Reducing services to certain legal immigrants (such as those in the US for five years or less) from Full Scope to Restricted Scope and requiring undocumented immigrants to apply for emergency services on a monthly basis
- Requiring more low-income seniors, blind and disabled to pay a share of costs for Medi-Cal services
- Using the Federal Safety Net Care Pool funds that currently support public hospitals to support several state programs.

Additionally, the Governor proposes the elimination of the First Five Commission and redirecting all state funds and

50% of county First 5 funds to support children's programs overseen by the Department of Social Services.

Community Health Council's coalitions will continue to advocate against the severe cuts to critical programs that provide health coverage for millions of California's children. Quick-fix budget savings equal long-term costs in their health impact on California's children and families. The cuts are short-sighted and not the solution to the growing and perpetual budget deficit.

## SCHIP Reauthorization Due

Congress hopes to have the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) reauthorization bill on President Obama's desk early in his administration. The current extension expires on March 31, 2009.

As a stand-alone bill, the reauthorization for SCHIP (HR 2) passed the US House of Representative on January 14, 2009 with a strong bi-partisan vote of 289-139. The US Senate Finance Committee passed a similar bill on January 15, 2009, along a party-line vote of 12 to 7 but with support from Republican Senator Olympia Snow.

The House bill passed on January 14<sup>th</sup> closely reflects the 2007 SCHIP bills that President Bush twice vetoed despite strong bipartisan support. The bill would cover nearly 4 million children in addition to the 7 million children who currently rely on SCHIP; is primarily paid through a 61 cent increase in the federal tobacco tax; and would extend SCHIP through 2013. The bill also lifts the 5-year ban on legal immigrant children and pregnant women receiving Medicaid and SCHIP coverage.

The Senate Bill is anticipated for a floor vote soon. Advocates can call their Senators at 800.828.0498 to indicate their support for the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

## PPP Allocation Update

On January 21, 2009, the PPP Allocation Methodology Work Group released their recommendations for the distribution and utilization of \$44.8 million in one-time

Tobacco Tax settlement funds in Los Angeles County. These funds had been identified and reserved to mitigate current inequities in the funding for PPP clinics. For example, SPA 6 demonstrates a need for \$10 million in funding to serve the residents of South LA, but receives only \$4 million in funding. Other areas of LA County that were identified as “under-equity” are SPA 1 (Antelope Valley); SPA 3 (San Gabriel); SPA 6 (South LA); SPA 7 (East LA); and SPA 8 (South Bay).

A summary of priorities and distribution of the funds are:

- \$4.8 million for capital projects/renovations to add/expand clinic capacity in SPAs 1, 3, 6, 7, 8
- \$1.5 million for the Encounter Summary Sheet project throughout all SPAs
- \$3 million for underserved geographic pockets in SPAs 2, 4, and 5
- \$35.5 million over 3 years to SPAs 1, 3, 6, 7 and 8 for expanded clinic capacity.

Community Health Councils is asking the Board of Supervisors to adopt the recommendation and provide more data and transparency on how the Work Group determined that the \$3 million should be redistributed to over-equity SPAs. Unless otherwise justified by the data, the funds should go to under-equity areas as a priority. For more information, please contact Annie Park at 323.295.9372 x246 or [annie@chc-inc.org](mailto:annie@chc-inc.org).

## **CHC Releases South LA Health Equity Scorecard**

More than 100 elected, city and county representatives, advocates, and community members joined Community Health Councils for the release of the *South LA Health Equity Scorecard* report in mid-December. The year-long study documents the inequities in South LA’s healthcare and physical resource environments by examining more than 50 socioeconomic and environmental factors that influence health behaviors and outcomes.

For the healthcare environment overall, the report found that South LA has 43 percent fewer resources than LA County, while West LA has 72 percent more. For the physical resource environment (nutrition, physical activity, public safety, schools, and air & land quality), the overall disparity is 85 percentage points. The report challenges city and county officials to develop a joint power agreement outlining a comprehensive plan to address the inequities.

Among the most startling indicators of the disparities between South and West LA were—

- In South LA, there are approximately 11 pediatricians for every 100,000 children, compared to 193 pediatricians for every 100,000 children in West LA. LA County overall has 57 pediatricians for every 100,000 children.
- South LA has 1.2 acres of recreation/green space for 1000 population vs 97.2 in LA County and 70.1 in West LA.
- South LA has 8.5 liquor stores per square mile compared to 1.97 stores in West LA.
- In South LA, 37 percent of households are overcrowded compared to fewer than 8 percent of households in West LA.
- In South LA, 64 percent of schools are classified as insufficiently staffed, resourced, and without a clean, safe, and functional learning environment according to Williams settlement standards. Only 8 percent of West LA schools did not meet these standards.

Recommendations were developed using the findings from the *Scorecard* and working with community partners as a call to take action to end these inequities. To view the full *South LA Health Equity Scorecard* report, please visit our website at [www.chc-inc.org](http://www.chc-inc.org).

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Food Desert to Food Oasis**

*Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup> & Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>.*

Join advocates, retailers, labor, and consumers in this day-and-a-half summit to examine options and opportunities to bring healthy food retailers to South Los Angeles. Day One will feature success stories in community redevelopment and growth from around the country. Participants will learn about community involvement; hear retailers’ perspectives and their creative solutions; and debate the perceptions and realities of South Los Angeles. Day Two will conclude with a discussion of two case studies, solutions to the food desert and a networking lunch. Sponsored by CHC, LISC, and PolicyLink at the Centers for Healthy Communities at The California Endowment, Los Angeles. For more information, contact Mia Boykin at 323-295-9372 ext. 216 or [mia@chc-inc.org](mailto:mia@chc-inc.org).

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