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New Report from CHC! Food Desert to Food Oasis: Promoting Grocery Store Development in South Los Angeles

Ready access to healthy food is taken for granted in most neighborhoods. But that is not the case in South Los Angeles, where many residents must travel outside the community to find fresh and nutritious food. *Food Desert to Food Oasis*, released by CHC this week and available at www.chc-inc.org/policy-briefs, examines policy and systems changes the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County can adopt to attract full-service grocery stores and improve access to affordable healthy foods in what is now a food desert.

This brief is the first in a series of reports on transforming South LA's food desert. The report focuses on the development of new full-service grocery stores in under-served neighborhoods, and documents the current food resource environment in South LA and the area's market potential. The recommendations are based on a year-long analysis by members of CHC's Food Resource Development Workgroup on how to overcome barriers to new development in South LA.

Hear a panel discussion about LA's food deserts with CHC's Lark Galloway-Gilliam and other experts on Southern California Public Radio at <http://www.scpr.org/programs/patt-morrison/2010/07/26/>.

New Regulations for No-Cost Preventive Services

The federal government released final regulations for health plans on July 14, 2010, ensuring for the provision of preventive services at no-cost to the consumer when delivered in-network. These services

include many laboratory tests, cancer screenings, routine vaccinations, prenatal care, counseling for smoking and obesity, and general wellness and education.

With these new regulations, government officials are hoping to increase the utilization of preventive services by consumers and patients, rather than having them delay care until more intensive, and costly, services are needed. Rough estimates show that patients and consumers currently use preventive services at only half the recommended rate. The new regulations will apply to health plans that start coverage after September 23, 2010 and existing plans that make changes after that date. More information on the regulations can be found at www.healthcare.gov, or contact Annie Park, CHC Policy Director, at apark@chc-inc.org.

California Health Insurance Exchange

California is on its way to establishing an implementation framework for the administrative and enrollment structure of the Health Insurance Exchange, one of many provisions states are required to implement by 2014 under the national healthcare reform bill. Insure the Uninsured Project's California's Health Benefits Exchange Legislation 2010 estimates that 2.3 million of California's uninsured will gain access to health coverage through the Exchange (see <http://www.itup.org/Reports/Health%20Reform/ExchangebillsSummaries06152010.pdf>). Individuals and families at 133-400% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$29,327 to \$88,200 for a family of four) will receive income-based subsidies to purchase health insurance. Small businesses will be able to purchase through the Exchange making them eligible for tax credits.

Two bills are currently moving through the state legislature (AB 1602: Perez and SB 900: Alquist/Steinberg) that would establish the Insurance Exchange in California and create a consumer-friendly marketplace for purchasing healthcare coverage and facilitate seamless enrollment. SB 900

and AB 1602 both establish the structure by which California would roll out the Exchange including the governance, health plan requirements, and functions of the Exchange. Federal health reform leaves the authority of constructing much of the Exchange to states.

Many policy questions must be addressed to ensure effective and smooth implementation. Some questions include:

- What role will existing public programs play in the Exchange and how will these programs be coordinated with the Exchange?
- How can the state best simplify and streamline enrollment systems to maximize participation in the Exchange?
- What roles and opportunities will exist for community-based outreach and enrollment efforts (i.e., Certified Application Assistors and Community Health Workers)?

As the state moves ahead, it will be critical that a stakeholder process for the development of the Exchange include participation from community partners and families. Lend your voice to helping inform the development and implementation of the Exchange by joining the Covering Kids and Families Statewide Coalition. For more information, contact Catherine Sepulveda, CHC Community Liaison, at Catherine@chc-inc.org.

Federal Government Launches Website on Health Coverage Options

The federal Department of Health and Human Services recently launched their new web portal HealthCare.gov to help connect individuals with information on healthcare coverage options in their states. The portal includes private insurance companies and public insurance programs and connects consumers with resources to understand the new health reform law, find insurance options, learn about prevention and how to stay healthy.

Zoning In on Healthier Fast Food

Community Health Councils and the Food Policy Roundtable coalition are hosting *Zoning In on Healthier Fast Food*, a Town Hall meeting to draw attention to the need for permanent regulations on the development of unhealthy fast food restaurants and

creating incentives for healthier restaurants in South Los Angeles. Fast food restaurants make up over two-thirds of the restaurants in South LA.

With obesity affecting 35% of adults and 29% of kids, restrictions on developing new fast food restaurants are necessary to create a better balance between unhealthy and healthy restaurants in our community. The interim control ordinance (ICO) sponsored by Councilmembers Jan Perry and Bernard Parks in 2008, which placed a moratorium on the development of new standalone fast food restaurants in the West Adams/Baldwin Hills, South and South East community plan areas, is set to expire on September 14, 2010. However, community plan updates will not be complete until 2011.

Help protect the health of our community by joining us at the Town Hall and sharing your concerns with elected officials and community leaders. The event will be held on August 12, 2010 from 6-8 pm at Second African Methodist Episcopal Church, 5500 South Hoover Street. Please contact Tanishia Wright at 323.295.9372 or Tanishia@chc-inc.org to RSVP.

Oil Drilling Resumes after Four Years

Plains Exploration and Production (PXP), the current oil operator at the Inglewood Oil Field, started new drilling on June 18th for the first time since 2006. Under the Baldwin Hills Community Standards District adopted by the Board of Supervisors in October 2008, PXP was allowed to start drilling after they completed a series of plans including the “2010 Drilling, Redrilling, Well Abandonment, and Well Pad Restoration Plan.” The Plan outlines a series of ten new wells to be drilled until mid-September.

The 2010 Drilling Plan, which outlines the drilling schedule and a map of drill locations, can be found at www.theinglewoodoilfield.com. All members of the public are invited to attend the next county-convened Community Advisory Panel on August 26, 2010 at 7 pm at the Kenneth Hahn Park Community Room, 4800 S. La Cienega Blvd, 90056.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ... CONTACT
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