

State Budget Update

California legislators once again missed the constitutional deadline of June 15th for enacting a 2010-11 state budget. Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed deep cuts in health and social services programs in his May Revise to close a near \$20 billion deficit. Both the Senate and Assembly Budget and Health Committees have since met and rejected several proposals that include:

- Eliminating coverage for many over-the-counter drugs
- Limiting prescription drug claims to six per month
- Setting a maximum annual benefit cap of \$1604 on durable medical equipment
- Restricting outpatient primary and specialty care provided by physicians to ten visits per year
- Establishing mandatory \$5 copayments for Medi-Cal recipients for physician, clinic, dental, and certain pharmacy services at Federally Qualified Health Centers & Rural Health Centers
- Setting a \$100 per day co-payment on hospital inpatient days to a maximum of \$200
- Eliminating Healthy Families Program vision care
- Increasing Healthy Families Program premiums for families between 200%-250% FPL by 75% and co-payments for emergency room visits by 233%.

Senate Democrats recently unveiled a plan to give counties greater control of state programs to help address the budget shortfall. To support these responsibilities, the plan outlines ways to capture additional revenues that include a state tax on oil production, permanently extending the state's higher vehicle license fee, and delaying corporate tax breaks. Republican leaders have indicated their willingness to work on a "realignment" plan, but continue to oppose ideas that involve raising new taxes to help pay for county costs.

State Controller John Chiang warned that if the State Budget is not resolved by August, California may issue IOUs.

In order for the final budget to pass, the Democrats need votes from Republican legislators and the Governor, who continue to pledge not to increase taxes no matter what the cost to the health of California's families.

Day at the Capitol

On June 15th, health advocates and families gathered at the State Capitol to put a face to the consequences of the cuts to health and social services in the proposed 2010-2011 California Budget. The day kicked off with a press conference followed by more than 30 visits with key legislators including the offices of the Governor and Speaker John Perez. More than 6,000 postcards from constituents were delivered to the Governor and legislators asking for their leadership to stop the proposed harmful cuts to California's safety net and healthcare system.

Community Health Councils and other health advocates will continue to meet with legislators and state leaders at the local level to ensure that the final state budget does not include cuts and eliminate programs that would undermine the health of California's economy and low-income and underserved families. CHC's *7 Things California Can Do to Protect the Health of Children & Families and Put People Back to Work* outlines revenue options to prevent almost all the Governor's proposed reductions to education, health and human services, and other public programs. For additional analysis around the budget crisis, please visit our website at www.chc-inc.org or contact Michelle Wood at michelle@chc-inc.org.

Prevention & Public Health Funding Allocated

In mid-June, the Obama Administration announced the fiscal year 2010 allocation of the Prevention and Public Health Fund created by the health reform law. Half of the \$500 million appropriated through the Fund will be used to expand the healthcare workforce and help meet the demand for doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants. The other half will be used for the Fund's stated purpose: prevention activities and developing the nation's public health infrastructure. Details are still unknown but prevention activities will incorporate federal, state and community initiatives including obesity prevention and tobacco cessation. Although bolstering the healthcare workforce is important, the public health community is hopeful that the \$15 billion released through the Fund over the next 10 years will focus on prevention and public health.

LA's Food Corner

Fast Food Moratorium

CHC's Food Policy Roundtable expressed their growing concerns regarding the impending expiration of the fast food Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) in a letter to Councilmembers Jan Perry and Bernard Parks in early June. The ICO placed a moratorium on the development of new fast food restaurants in the West Adams/Baldwin Hills, South and South East community plan areas. The ICO is set to expire on September 14, 2010 and is ineligible for an extension. The letter asks Councilmembers Perry and Parks to work with the Roundtable to develop permanent restrictions or a temporary solution until the three community plan updates are adopted in 2011. With fast-food restaurants making up nearly 72% of all restaurants in South LA, the ICO cannot be allowed to expire without another policy to replace it. For more information, contact Tanishia Wright, Community Liaison. Tanishia@chc-inc.org.

Abandoned Shopping Cart Ordinance

Community Health Councils has asked the City Council to exempt South Los Angeles and other food deserts from a possible abandoned shopping cart ordinance or fee. The Council approved a motion (File 02-2070) in May instructing the City Attorney to prepare a citywide ordinance requiring new business developments to purchase systems to contain shopping carts on their premises and directing the Bureau of Sanitation to prepare an abandoned shopping cart fee study.

An exemption for food deserts is necessary to ensure these policies do not further discourage grocery store development and impact the ability of existing stores to remain profitable. In addition, residents in these communities often walk or take public transportation to grocery stores and rely on shopping carts to carry their groceries home. Their ability to take carts off store premises is critical to their capacity to shop, which in turn impacts store profitability and sustainability. For more information, contact Nicky Bassford, Policy Analyst, nicky@chc-inc.org.

CHC will be releasing *Food Desert to Food Oasis: Promoting Grocery Store Development in South Los Angeles* in mid July. The report analyzes the barriers to grocery store development in South Los Angeles and provides the City and County with policy solutions to attract new retailers. Contact Janice Taylor, Communications Director Janice@chc-inc.org for more information on this publication.

Register to Vote!

The election season has begun, and Community Health Councils is working to increase community capacity for voter engagement and advocacy. To protect and improve the health of our communities, we encourage everyone to engage in the political process and encourage others to do so, including your constituents. For information on how to get involved, contact Laura Ewing, Laura@chc-inc.org.

It's not too late to register for the November 2nd General Election. Voter registration forms are available online at www.sos.ca.gov or at most post offices, DMVs, libraries and other public facilities. If you have moved, changed your name or want to change your political party affiliation, you must re-register to vote. In Los Angeles County, the status of your voter registration can be checked online at www.lavote.net or by calling the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk at 562.466-1310 or 562.466.1323.

South Health Center Groundbreaking

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas welcomed community members to the ground-breaking ceremony for the new \$20 million *South Health Center* on June 11th. The new facility at 120th Street and Wilmington Avenue in Watts-Willowbrook will provide critical public health services and create 10,000 new jobs in the community. Prevention education, immunizations, and some testing and treatment of sexually-transmitted disease, tuberculosis, and other communicable diseases are among the services available at the Center. The South Health Center is one of several healthcare projects underway in the community, including the new Martin Luther King Hospital scheduled for completion in December of 2012. For more information, contact Annie Park at apark@chc-inc.org.

Health Reform Resources

Local Impact of National Health Reform. *Thursday, July 15th. 8:30-10:30am.* Panelists will discuss the mechanics of healthcare reform, new opportunities and potential gaps between state and county responsibilities to provide healthcare services to residents, and the likely impact of the reforms on Los Angeles and in particular, inner city communities. Panelists include Lark Galloway-Gilliam, Community Health Councils; Abbie Coursolle, WCLP; Howard Kahn, LA Care Health Plan; Kathy Ochoa, SEIU. California Science Center, 700 Exposition Park Drive, LA 90027. RSVP to 323.343.3770 or <http://www.patbrowninstitute.org/register/255/>.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ... CONTACT
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