



MRMIB Considers Freezing Healthy Families Enrollment

The Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB), the California State agency that administers the Healthy Families program, discussed authorizing a waitlist for new applicants at their Board meeting on November 19th. Approximately 162,000 children would be added to a waitlist over a six-month period, with enrollment estimated to drop from 904,000 in November to 787,000 in June 2009. New enrollment will close on December 18th, 2008 if the Board opts to implement the waitlist to manage the current year's \$17 million deficit at their December meeting.

Community Health Councils and other statewide advocates testified at the meeting, urging the Board to delay a decision to impose the waitlist on children's coverage and instead work together with the legislature and Governor to identify an alternative solution. Some of the key issues advocates raised included the impact on families who will be shut out of coverage and forced to delay care. The waitlist will also put future SCHIP dollars in jeopardy, cost millions in federal matching funds to the state, and would undermine a decade of investments by MRMIB, the California Department of Health Care Services and the community in Healthy Families/Medi-Cal outreach and enrollment.

In addition to the advocates, families whose children are enrolled in Healthy Families testified at the Board meeting. One mother spoke of how Healthy Families has truly helped meet the needs of her family and three children in the program. The mother continued, "families are struggling in these tough times and I'm glad that this state health program is there for us—I hope it will be there for other families who will need it in the future."

Community Health Councils urges advocates and families to contact their local legislators and tell them to support finding a solution in the state budget to fully fund Healthy Families and encourage the Board to delay any freeze in Healthy Families enrollment.

CHC Files Suit Against LA County over Baldwin Hills Oil Drilling

CHC and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) filed a lawsuit on November 25th against the County of Los Angeles. The lawsuit challenges the county for failing to provide adequate health and environmental safeguards against the dangers of expanded oil drilling in the densely-populated neighborhoods of south Los Angeles and Culver City.

The lawsuit involves a set of protective measures known as the Baldwin Hills Community Standards District (CSD), which is intended to regulate oil drilling and production activities in the Baldwin Hills. In the lawsuit, the citizen groups claim that the county violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by failing to conduct an adequate environmental impact report (EIR) before adopting the CSD.

The lawsuit contends that the county squandered a two-year moratorium on drilling and then rushed the environmental review process. Despite requests to extend the review process by state and local agencies and pleas from the community to recirculate the outdated environmental report, as required by law, the county decided to approve the project anyway. The county and PXP, the oil company, tried to make it as difficult as possible for the community to voice their concerns over the oil drilling in their backyards. The county violated the law and put thousands of lives at risk to expand unnecessary oil drilling.

Background

In January 2006, uncontrolled emissions of noxious gas from the Baldwin Hills Oil Field caused the evacuation of dozens of people and impacted more than 500 homes in adjacent neighborhoods. A similar incident occurred in February 2006.

Community action resulting from the two incidents prompted the county to adopt emergency restrictions on drilling operations, and eventually led to a temporary moratorium on new well drilling through October 2008.

In an effort to hinder public review, PXP failed to submit its draft CSD in a timely fashion, delaying the environmental review process and causing the county to rush through what should have been a thorough review process. With the agreement to refrain from drilling set to expire in October 2008, the county chose to approve the inadequate CSD document last month, to allow expanded drilling without sufficient oversight and protections for the community and environment.

The lawsuit challenges the county vote authorizing PXP to develop 600 new oil wells during the next 20 years in Baldwin Hills without any further public hearings or environmental review.

Daniel Freeman Hospital Update

On December 9th, the City of Inglewood will consider whether or not to continue the moratorium on issuing zoning approvals, building permits, business tax certificates or licenses for non-medical uses of the Daniel Freeman Memorial Hospital property. Extension of the moratorium will allow the city and community stakeholders to finalize a plan for a new, sustainable model of health delivery for the Daniel Freeman service area that capitalizes on the community's strengths and addresses its needs. South Los Angeles has suffered the loss of three hospitals over the last five years, leaving a region with a population in excess of one million residents with fewer hospitals, hospital beds, emergency-room treatment areas, and fewer medical practitioners than any other region in Los Angeles County.

Healthcare stakeholders are putting together an analysis and report for restoration of services at the Hospital. Under the leadership of Community Health Councils, Drew University and Inglewood Councilman Daniel K. Tabor, an Advisory Board—consisting of nearly 30 organizations and residents including health groups, government, community organizations, unions, educational institutions, religious groups, and community members—has been established to guide a feasibility study and examine the various options available to a new owner and the community. The feasibility study will be completed by the end of this year. It will be followed by the development of an implementation plan that includes potential partnerships and a business plan that identifies the necessary

licensure, regulatory approvals, and financial commitments.

Anyone who would like more information on the project should contact Nancy Watson at nancy@chc-inc.org.

Status of PPP Funding Allocations

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion on October 7, 2008 that designated \$44.8 million in one-time Tobacco Settlement Funds to address inequitable funding among clinic providers in the Public Partnership Program. Currently, the allocation of funding to the clinics by SPA (Service Planning Area) is disproportionate to each SPA's need. South LA clinics are calculated to receive 18.4% of total PPP funding in order to fully meet the needs of their residents. However, they only receive 8.0% of actual funding from the program. The adopted motion allocates \$4.8 million in funding for infrastructure investments and the remaining \$40 million to address inequities in the SPAs that are underfunded. The PPP Allocation Workgroup is expected to provide recommendations and report back within 90 days to the Board regarding the specific use and distribution of these funds.

CHC's South Los Angeles Health Equity Scorecard

Thursday, December 11th 9-11:30 am.

Join CHC and community advocates for the release of our groundbreaking report. The *Scorecard* documents the inequities in South LA's healthcare and physical resource environments and provides policy recommendations for a healthy community. The keynote address will be given by newly-elected County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. Holman United Methodist Church, 3320 West Adams Blvd, Los Angeles 90018. RSVP to Korie White Flournoy at 323.295.9372 x228 or korie@chc-inc.org.

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