



Maternal and Child Health Access

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MCH Access Monthly Meeting – CANCELLED for March
Due to untimely major power outage at our office (!) and spring break week
Usually Third Thursday monthly – next meeting Thurs. April 17!

In this mailing:

(See mailing on our website to use hyperlinks)

- **New Federal Poverty Level** worksheet and grid for April 1, 2008 (don't use before 4-1-08!) ALL of our fact sheets and grids will be updated and online by April 1 – no foolin'!
- **Fighting State Budget Cuts** – with attached Quarterly Status Reports & Dental Cuts Fact Sheets
- **2-24-08 Santa Cruz Sentinel**, “Tackling Hidden Epidemic in Kids” (Dental cuts)

Non-dated materials from February 21, 2008

- Quick Summary Special Session Actions – State Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review
- PAC-LAC Save the Date – May 29, 2008 – Quality of Life for Families XII
- *Contra Costa Times*, 2-20-08, “Death rates still high for black infants”
- Press Release, ACOG, “Obstetricians Concerned Cuts Will Increase California’s Preterm Birth Rate...”
- *LA Times*, 2-20-08, “Mothers tout DWP lactation service; chief says it will stay”
- *LA Times*, 2-20-08, “LA County to keep healthcare clinics open – for now”
- Motion by Sup. Knabe to look at cost-saving options for county health and analysis of clinic privatization

Dental articles and information:

- “Oral Health in Los Angeles: Not Everyone is Smiling” June 8, 2007, Children’s Oral Health Project
- First 5 Oral Health Slide Presentation
- State Health Policy Monitor – August, 2007, “SCHIP Dental Benefits”
- Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report, 2-20-08, “Dental Coverage” - fedl hearing on improving access to dental
- Oral Health and Oral Health Care among women in Maternal and Infant Health Assessment

Guest Speakers: Carol Parker, Children’s Oral Health Project of Southern California; Conrado Barzaga, MD, First 5 LA

Ms. Parker discussed last year’s forum on oral health in Los Angeles, sponsored by the Children’s Oral Health Project and the USC School of Dentistry. The forum was held to develop strategies to secure and sustain oral care access for underserved populations. Topics addressed included: homeless health care issues, school readiness and attendance and oral health, disabled and elderly dental problems, oral health and systemic health, and dental workforce issues. Presenters highlighted the significance that dental disease has on all phases of life, from childhood through old age and on vulnerable populations. Solutions, strategies and recommendations were proposed, including the need to increase the dental reimbursement rate, and develop new workforce categories for community dental health workers. The Dental Practice Act in California is very restrictive and in addition, only 15-18 loan repayment awards (loans forgiven to practice in underserved areas) are given per year in Calif. Dr. Barzaga oversees health projects at First 5 LA (F5LA). He discussed the importance of oral health in children, noting that First Five California in its “Mommy, It Hurts to Chew” report, found that distinctive patterns of severe tooth decay in infants and young children were one of the most common diseases in these age groups. F5LA’s Board approved \$10 million for Oral Health and Nutrition in October, 2006. The various oral health projects include: Oral Health and Nutrition, Oral Health Community Development and Oral Health Direct The Project Framework includes funding for access and direct services, such as actual care, parent education, and provider trainings; public education, and policy and advocacy. With the advent of bottled water, the benefits of fluoridation were not being felt in Los Angeles. In 2007, F5LA funded \$20 million for water fluoridation infrastructure equipment construction and related public education

activities over 3 years. Dr. Barzaga noted that with 755,000 children in Los Angeles under 5 and only about 150 pediatric dentists, addressing provider shortage is critical. Maria from Pasadena discussed how difficult it is to find a provider who will see pregnant women, despite the funding under Medi-Cal. Lynn pointed out dental articles and related that MCHA is following up on low numbers of visits for children under three enrolled in dental managed care plans in Los Angeles.

Deficit Reduction Act Update

Donald Nollar of MCHA noted that state notices for Medi-Cal redeterminations in March-April-May were sent from the state on January 28. LA County is saying they may be ready to notify beneficiaries in August. Please let Donald know if your clients are currently experiencing difficulties with DRA for any reason.

Personalized Provider Directories – Medi-Cal Managed Care

The State Department of Health Care Services, Medi-Cal Managed Care drafted legislation to allow the development of a new type of provider directory to be used by Medi-Cal beneficiaries when choosing a managed care health plan. The legislation calls for the development of a “personalized provider directory” (PPD) based on a beneficiary's residence or (if requested) any other location within the plan's service area. The directories will list 50 valid (i.e. accepting referrals) providers and at least 20 clinics, if that many exists in the county. The legislation states that the PPD will be developed as a pilot project in Sacramento and Los Angeles Counties and will take place "in consultation with a workgroup to include health plan representatives, legislative staff, and consumer stakeholders". This is a sea change from what the Department had originally proposed in the legislation, thanks to the Western Center on Law and Poverty, which was to just go ahead and start sending new, more limited directories within six months to the entire state. We will review the new managed care packets at a meeting prior to their implementation.

Four consumer/advocacy representatives have met several times with plans and the state to provide input to the directories for Los Angeles County and Sacramento; we think we've made great progress and vastly improved what might have been.

If you have questions or would like to see the proposed prototype directories at our office or a meeting, please contact Lynn Kersey at (213) 749-4261 or by e-mail lynnk@mchaccess.org.

Update on State Budget issues – Watch for April 15 (tax day!) action!

Several press conferences have been held by education groups who will see first effects of state budget cuts via pink slips to teachers; by law by March 15 if layoffs to take place July 1. In Los Angeles, a coalition of community organizations and labor unions has met twice to propose points of unity and actions. A similar coalition of statewide organizations meets in Sacramento (see Sac Bee article, enclosed). These efforts are to avoid a “cut someone else” mentality and to make the point that all services – health care, education, parks, clean air - are critical for a healthy and educated populace, as well as to support alternatives of closing tax loopholes and raising additional funding. Since Republican legislators have vowed “no taxes” and seem determined to cut their way to a balanced budget, we need to support those legislators who recognize the damage that will be done and convince others who don't see the harm that will befall too many Californians should such cuts happen. Already the Republicans have defeated a measure to tax oil production, something ALL other oil-producing states do. These states do NOT have higher gas prices. The measure would prohibit passing on the cost to consumers in higher gas prices. We need your help! We would like to help you visit your legislator – contact Donald or Lynn at MCHA. donaldn@mchaccess.org or lynnk@mchaccess.org. Especially if you live in one of the five Republican Assembly (Anthony Adams, Robert Huff, Sharon Runner, Cameron Smyth, Audra Strickland) or three Senate (Bob Margett, Tom McClintock, George Runner) Districts in Los Angeles County.



New Women's Health Reports

- National Women's Health Resource Center Reports: “Women & Health Screenings, “Women & Gastrointestinal Conditions”
www.healthywomen.org
- Making the Grade on Women's Health – National and State by State Report Card – National Women's Law Center <http://hrc.nwlc.org>
- Become aware of the National Women's Health Network, their publications and the advocacy and political work they do: www.nwhn.org
- 2005 Perinatal Indicators for Los Angeles County
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/mch/fhop/FHOP05/FHOP%20Report%202005.pdf>