



Maternal and Child Health Access

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MCH Access Monthly Meeting

Thursday, May 20, 2004 10 AM – 12 Noon

1111 W. 6th St., free parking.

Entrance in rear, on 5th St. (see covered parking entrance)

MCH Initiatives: AIM babies change to Healthy Families

1931(b) LEADER programming effective – what this will mean

Midyear Status Reports for pregnant women

Updates: Voluntary managed care enrollees to get voluntary packets.

Medi-Cal “Reform”, State budget

In this mailing:

- **Governor’s “May Revise” budget revision**
- **Managed Care info to aged, blind, disabled!**
- **Expand Newborn Screening** –March of Dimes
- **Nominations** - Healthy Families Advisory Panel
- **Give LA County input on MCH 5-year plan!**
- **5-26 Breastfeeding Conference** – Sacramento

Distributed April 22: an unprecedented number of materials - (213) 749-4261 for copies of any:

From speaker on mercury:

- “Methylmercury: Epidemiology Update”
- Copies of slides used in presentation, “Mercury: Threats to the Environmental and Public Health”
- Brochure in English and Spanish: “Mercury: Your Environment, Your Food, Your Health”
- USA Today, 4-8-04, “Study: Pregnant women eating too much fish”

From Bus Rider’s Union and Labor-Community Strategy Center

- Clean Air, Clean Lungs, Clean Buses Campaign
- What do you and your family breathe every day
- “Get on the bus for children’s lungs” survey
- 4-15 State DHS news release, ‘State Health Department Warns Consumers Not To Eat Chaca Chaca, Lead-Contaminated Candy From Mexico’
- Sacramento Bee, “Governor has no position on key health initiative” – quote that all children should have health insurance included.
- JAMA 4-14-04, “Biological Clock Ticks for Men, Too”
- LA Times, 4-11-04, “Health Department Peddles a Regimen for New Yorkers”; 4-22-04, “Effort to

Shrink King/Drew Neonatal ICU to Continue”

- Women’s Policy Institute 2004 Fellowship application, due 5/31
- Grant guidelines for Blue Cross Community Support Grants (\$500), due 6-30-04
- March of Dimes Community Grants, due 7/1
- M&Ms raise \$\$ for breast cancer – announcement
- LA County Children’s Planning Council report, “Keep Your Promise to Children” – face page
- 4/23 Stop the Violence forum
- 4/24 Festival of Childhood
- 4/27 “Walk In Their Shoes Press Conference”
- 4/30 Youth HIV Conference
- 5/6 “Face the Cuts” Rally against state budget
- 5/6 PACLAC - Improving Pregnancy Outcomes
- 5/14 Domestic Violence & Health Care Conf
- 5/27 American Indian Research Symposium
- 6/21 Norwood School Health & Peace Festival
- 6/27 Public Lecture by Dolores Huerta
- MCHA position paper on Medi-Cal “Reform”
- Webpage for www.Medi-CalRedesign.org
- Brochures in English, Spanish & Chinese from Health Consumer Center on Discount Health Plans
- La Posada housing for teen single moms 16-25

Notes from meeting April 22:

Speaker, Johanna Congleton, Physicians for Social Responsibility – Mercury: Threats to the Environment and Public Health

Ms. Congleton provided an update on several key issues: the EPA rollback on mercury contaminant guidelines; environmental and public health concerns with mercury; sources; policies to reduce

mercury pollution and what you can do. Mercury is a heavy metal and easily crosses the blood-brain barrier and placenta. It accumulates in fetal blood at higher rates than maternal blood, causing an EPA- estimated 630,000 infants born yearly at risk of nervous system damage. At the same time, EPA has proposed to weaken a previous plan to regulate mercury. Many believe the EPA's posted warnings do not go far enough for amounts and kinds of fish to avoid during pregnancy and for children. Sources of mercury pollution also include medical waste; mercury thermometers are now illegal in many states, including California. (NEVER attempt to clean up mercury.) This prompted discussion of holding "thermometer exchanges" with clients and where mercury thermometers could be safely disposed (see city website, below). Ms. Congleton provided suggestions on what could be done at local, state and national levels to ban and limit mercury, including providing comments on federal proposed guidelines and standards for mercury. www.lacity.org Bureau of Sanitation gives information on hazardous waste disposal www.psr.org is the Physicians for Social Responsibility www.psr.org is for LA Chapter www.mercurypolicy.org is the Mercury Policy Project's website. www.epa.gov/mercury provides EPA's advisories and information www.noharm.org is Health CareWithout Harm

Cynthia Gomez and Carla Gonzalez, Labor-Community Strategy Center and the Bus Rider's Union "Clean Air, Clean Lungs, Clean Buses" Campaign

This is a long term campaign aimed at cleaning up the air we breathe to effect asthma, birth defects and other health issues that can be related to air pollution. Very specific goals have been targeted: auto-free zones; creating bus-only lanes on LA County streets and freeways, doubling the average fuel economy of cars to 50 mpg by 2010, doubling MTA's clean fuel buses to 5,000 and in the process, cut in half the eight million cars in Los Angeles. The group is starting with a survey of those who use buses in LA. For info or to help with the survey, (213) 387-2800.

California HealthCare Foundation releases Second Edition of Medi-Cal Guide: (510) 286-8976 or www.chcf.org

New: Still No Specific Proposal from the State on Its Medi-Cal " Re-Design" - Presentation to Legislature Postponed Until August 2

See www.medi-calredesign.org for the May 7 stakeholder report summarizing stakeholder input, as well as the state's report on the redesign process, excerpted here: "Nearly all workgroup members felt that the concepts under consideration by the Administration represented significant policy changes that require more time for deliberation than the allotted two months. In particular, the Administration intends to focus on the issue of hospital financing, which is central to supporting the State's safety net hospitals and to enabling broader reform in the Medi-Cal delivery system. In recognition of the scope and complexity of this undertaking, the Administration intends to submit a waiver proposal and legislative bill language on August 2. "

The state Department of Health Services (DHS) still intends, however, to submit a "waiver" to the federal government this fall, seeking approval to implement drastic changes to Medi-Cal starting January 1, 2005. As far as we know, DHS still plans to cut at least \$400 million a year by making many low-income families and disabled individuals who now qualify for Medi-Cal without charge instead pay premiums and co-pays, plus "co-insurance" of 20% of the cost of certain benefits, and to expand the use of Medi-Cal managed care

While the Legislature will be asked on or after August 2 to approve the proposal before it is submitted to the federal government, if the Legislature declines, DHS plans to go forward anyway and to ask the Legislature to sign off after federal approval is received, which seems certain. As of this writing, it is unclear whether the Medi-Cal Re-design will be addressed in the state budget process at all. For all of these reasons, it is critical that advocates press for disclosure of details of the DHS plan before August 2 and for an adequate opportunity for Legislative and public input about the waiver, as well as alternative approaches for improving Medi-Cal without the waiver, before any proposal is submitted.

Save the Date! June 18-19: Founding Statewide Convention to End Poverty in California. Sponsored by a host of organizations: www.californiadreamfoundation.org or call 818-725-7900.