



Maternal and Child Health Access

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Next MCH Access monthly meeting:

This Thursday, October 15, 2009, 10 AM – 12 noon

MCHA 1111 W. 6th St., Fourth Fl.

Free parking in back, entering on Fifth St. – please allow time to park

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Kathy Attar – Physicians for Social Responsibility

Liz Stillwell, Los Angeles County Office of Women's Health (invited)

See Breast Cancer Action: www.bcaction.org for their “Think Before You Pink” campaign – which calls for more transparency and accountability by companies which take part in breast cancer fundraising and encourages us to ask critical questions about pink ribbon promotions. They've had a demonstrable effect on Yoplait, for instance...

We have gone green! Feedback welcomed!

In this mailing:

- Federal Health Reform – What Does It Mean for California?
- Healthy Families Update
- Welcoming *Welcome Baby!*
- Bills Signed ☺ and Vetoed ☹
- CalKIDs opening again!
- Positions at MCH Access
- Resources
- Save the Date
- Advocacy Tip!

Non-outdated materials from September meeting (call or email for copies: info@mchaccess.org)

- MCH Access, “Medi-Cal Managed Care Personalized Provider Directories” (on website)
- MCHA 9-15-09 comments on AIM Enrollment limitation relating to insufficient funding
- Healthy Families Update 9-16-09
- Sample support letters AB 98
- Myths and Facts on Illegal Immigration – *LA Times*, 9-7-09
- CA DPH Letter on Changes to the WIC food program effective 10-1-09. For more info/mtls see www.wicworks.ca.gov
- Materials from presenters:

- MCHA model of scheduled visits for Welcome Baby! home visitation program starting this month.
- HR 3200 – what does it mean for the Coverage of California's Families?
- About Health Access
- Five Reasons why Californians Need Health Reform
- Health Consumer Center flyer on cuts to adult Medi-Cal services effective July 1, 2009
- 3 State Department of Health Care Services flyers on Reductions in Medi-Cal Benefits (see www.medi-cal.ca.gov)
- 1931(b) Medi-Cal and Third Trimester Entry Into Managed Care – MCHA background sheet
- Medicare's Role for Women – Fact Sheet June, 2009

Federal Health Reform – What Does It Mean for California?

Nancy M. Gomez

Southern California Regional Organizer, **Health Access**

Angela Woods, Health Access

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Nancy presented an impassioned and fact-filled power point presentation explaining and simplifying “what's going on” nationally with health care reform – why it's necessary (Californians are more likely to be uninsured than most Americans), what

the process is, what the federal policies being considered are and where the pressure points are. Health Access, a statewide organization (www.health-access.org) serves as the statewide coordinator for Health Care for America NOW and is supporting federal efforts to reform the health care system. Nancy's slides covered how it is expected that health care reform will affect on-the-job coverage, how it will improve public programs, what the new choices will be through the health care "Exchange" and the role of the Public Health Insurance Option. Cost Containment and Financing are important topics within this process. The slide show ended with what can YOU do:
Call/write/fax your Congressman
Be a voice in health care – share stories and write to media outlets such as newspapers.
Join a campaign for health care:
www.healthcareforamericanow.org in addition to the Health Access website.
Contact Nancy or Angela for speaking engagements. Contact Martin for a copy of the powerpoint at info@mchaccess.org

Welcome Baby! - Luz Chacon, Project Director, Welcome Baby! MCH Access

Welcome Baby! is a free program for women while they are pregnant and postpartum, and their newborns. MCH Access is pleased to be implementing this pilot program with partners at California Hospital Medical Center, First Five LA., and a number of community partners. The project is part of the Best Start initiative to build community resources and provide access to activities that promote the health, growth and care of families and children from pregnancy to three years of age. Women who participate will receive one-on-one visits from a nurse and home visitors before and after birth until their baby reaches nine months of age. Goals of the program include:

- Increasing exclusive breastfeeding rates
- Allow for early identification and support of perinatal depression
- Ensure all young children receive health coverage from birth
- Encourage moms to keep health appointments and their babies' appointments
- Assist new parents to maintain a safe and nurturing home environment

- Support families in understanding and strengthening their child's physical and emotional development

The pilot will take place with women giving birth at California Hospital Medical Center. For more information contact Luz Chacon, (213) 749-4261 ext. 103.

Healthy Families Update

On Sept. 22 Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1422 to close the \$196 million gap in the Healthy Families program by raising premiums and co-pays for program participants, taxing health plans that participate in the program and changing participants' dental coverage to managed care. MRMIB is processing the wait list AND new. However, MRMIB has recently been informed that federal CHIPRA requirements will not allow an increase in copayments (from \$5 to \$10 per AB 1422) for families at or below 150% of poverty.

For a list of premium and co-pay changes which will take place in November, [CLICK HERE](#) To read the *Los Angeles Times* article on AB1422, [CLICK HERE](#). These new funds will prevent the previously planned disenrollment of up to 700,000 children from the program and that children on the waiting list will be enrolled into Healthy Families. MRMIB will meet on September 16 to decide if there are enough funds to abolish the waiting list. Read the Sept. 3 announcement by MRMIB's Executive Director that [Healthy Families will reopen](#).

Maternal and Child Health Access is the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against the State of California for failing to ensure that children who are potentially eligible for benefits under Medi-Cal are being correctly screened at Single Point of Entry and not simply placed on the Healthy Families Waiting list. For information on the lawsuit [CLICK HERE](#). We have clients with letters dated after Sept. 23 who are still being wait listed – we'd like to hear from you if your clients are still being wait listed, were processed for Healthy Families without consideration of Medi-Cal eligibility, if they've had health problems or needs while on the wait list or if they'd like to help – contact Celia Valdez at (213) 749-4261 ext. 116.

Bills Signed and Vetoed

We are disheartened that Governor Schwarzenegger VETOED – making it the third or fourth time in a row – AB 98, mandating maternity care for pregnant women in individual insurance policies. He also VETOED both breastfeeding bills from California WIC Association - AB 513 - Healthcare Coverage/Breastfeeding, saying that mandates increase the cost of health coverage and SB 527 – to require notification of employees of lactation accommodation, saying it was unnecessary. See the veto messages on the Breastfeeding Task Force's website: www.breastfeedla.org.

Sunday, Oct. 11 was the last day for the Governor to sign or veto bills. He acted on 685 bills, signing 456 and vetoing 229. Below are some of the bills California Health Family Council and MCH Access have been working on and their outcomes; **thanks to CHFC for this rapid synopsis and allowing us to post it!**

Signed bills:

AB 17 (Swanson), Human Trafficking

Quadruples fines, to \$20,000, on those convicted of human trafficking and allows law enforcement offices to seize assets of traffickers. Money and assets collected would be spent on local programs serving trafficking survivors.

AB 119 (Jones), Health Care Coverage: Pricing

Prohibits health insurers from charging a premium, price or charge differential because of the sex of specified individuals.

AB 221 (Portantino), HIV Testing: Skin Punctures

Exempts an HIV counselor who works under a licensed physician and surgeon, and who is trained in rapid HIV test proficiency and universal infection control precautions, from the requirement that he or she hold a valid phlebotomist technician certification.

AB 359 (Nava), Breast and Cervical Cancer: Mammography: Reimbursement

Authorizes, to the extent permitted by federal law, digital mammography screening to be covered when analog mammography services are not available from the provider, to be reimbursed at the Medi-Cal film or analog rate.

Vetoed bills:

AB 56 (Portantino), Health Care Coverage: Mammographies

Provides health care service plan contracts and individual and group policies of health insurance shall be deemed to provide coverage for mammographies for screening or diagnostic purposes upon referral of a

participating nurse practitioner, certified nurse-midwife, physician assistant or physician. Requires plans, and insurers subject to these provisions, to provide subscribers or policyholders with information regarding recommended timelines for an individual to undergo tests for breast cancer.

AB 98 (De La Torre), Maternity Services

Requires health insurance policies submitted to the Insurance Department to provide coverage for maternity services. Requires insurers to include that coverage in the corresponding policies that are issued, amended, or renewed following the department's approval of the revised forms.

AB 513 (De Leon), Health Care Coverage: Breast-Feeding

Requires health care service plans and a health insurers to include coverage for lactation consultation and the provision or rental of specified types of breast pumps as part of their health care service plan contracts or health insurance policies that provide maternity coverage.

AB 543 (Ma), Perinatal Care: Nurse-Family Partnership

Amends existing law that establishes the Nurses-Family Partnership Program to provide grants for voluntary nurse home visiting programs for expectant first-time mothers, their children and their families. Makes funds available for the program. Permits the Department of Public Health to accept federal grants for purposes of the program. Permits the program to be implemented if it is determined that adequate funding is available. Requires a specified account to cease if such a determination is not made.

AB 657 (Hernandez), Health Professions Workforce

Requires the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development to establish the Health Professions Workforce Task Force to assist in the development of a health professions workforce master plan for the state. Requires the task force to submit a complete statewide health professions workforce master plan. Requires the task force to seek funds from the federal government and private entities for these purposes.

SB 158 (Wiggins), Health Care Coverage: Human Papillomavirus Vaccination

Requires health care service plans and health insurance policies that include coverage for the treatment of cervical cancer upon the referral of the patient's physician and surgeon, nurse practitioner or certified nurse midwife, to provide that those provision apply if the referral is made by a physician assistant. Requires the plan and contracts and policies to provide coverage for a human papillomavirus vaccination.

CalKIDs opening again!

California Kids program is once again open for enrollment in Los Angeles County. California Kids offers coverage for outpatient medical services, dental and some mental health services. There are no income, immigration or other health coverage restrictions. The plan is open to children between the ages of 2 and 18. Partially because there are no income limits, premiums are \$49.00 per month and co-pays range between \$3.00 and \$110.00, depending on the service provided making the cost prohibitive for some families. [CLICK HERE](#) to access MCHA's California Kids fact sheet.

California Kids does not cover hospitalization or inpatient surgeries. For more information or to get an application call California Kids at (818) 755-9700 or visit www.californiakids.org

Save the Dates!

Weds. Oct. 14, 2009 9am - 4pm: _ Valley Care Olive View, Sylmar, ***“Breastfeeding Current Issues: Obesity, Baby Friendly, WIC Changes & H1N1”***

Tues., Nov. 17, 2009 ***“Building Your Breastfeeding Community: Communication, Assessment and Resources”*** San Gabriel Valley www.breastfeedla.org

October 29, 2009, 10 AM – 4 PM Black Women for Wellness will convene a one-day symposium **RESPECT! Inclusion with Integrity of African Americans In Health Care** in Los Angeles, bringing together public health advocates, scholars, grassroots leadership and community organizations to discuss the status of African American and Black women's health. This day will include coalition building for addressing health disparity experienced by Black women and girls with a strategy session to achieve cultural competency in care education and services.

See www.bwwla.org to register for this FREE event – free with registration

Advocacy Tip!

Food Stamps - no asset counting for families with children

As of July 24, 2009, Los Angeles County has implemented the state's new food stamp rule that allows families with kids under age 18 to be eligible regardless of the amount of “assets” (such as money in bank accounts) they possess. The family's income will still be used as a guideline, but assets won't count.

In this recession many families needing assistance haven't been able to get it because they're trying to hang on to the savings they've worked hard to obtain. Now families struggling with unemployment or shifting to lower income jobs can get food stamp (SNAP-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits to make sure their kids get enough to eat. MCH Access assists with food stamp applications in the downtown area; call Marcela (213) 749-4261 or [click here](#) for a list of community agencies in which to apply for food stamps.

Resources!

The Downtown Ralphs grocery store is now carrying salsa made by Homegirl Café!! Here's a link to the story:

<http://blogdowntown.com/2009/10/4749-ralphs-teams-with-homegirl-cafe-to-offer>

Positions!

MCH Access is still hiring for Welcome, Baby! positions – nurses and other home visitors - posted at www.mchaccess.org. Finance/Executive Asst. to be posted soon.