



# LWV/LACounty

An Interleague Organization

# VOTER

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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### Calendar 2012

- Sat, Mar 31                      County Convention, 10:00 – 2:00,  
Pickwick Gardens, Burbank ( see flyer inside)
- Sat, Apr 28                      Ballot Measure Training, 9:30 – 12:00  
Hollenbeck Palms
- Sat, July 28                      Popovers in Pasadena – details TBA

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**From the President's Desk...**

The County League Convention is just around the corner – March 31. We are pleased to have our LWVC Public Policy Director and advocate, Trudy Schaefer, as our speaker. She knows the working of the Legislature and will fill us in on the legislation that is coming up this year. She'll also comment on the state budget, an area of continual trauma and concern. Be sure to make your reservations, if you have not already done so.

Margo Reeg will lead ballot measure training at Hollenbeck Palms on April 28. With only two ballot measures, it leaves time for some discussion of ways to present the measures as well as approaches to explaining how the “top two” primary will work. As this primary is a new process for voters, our Leagues are likely to get lots of questions. Think about the way you will respond to assist voters. Fill out the form for ordering Election Guides/Info. The County League will be printing these as a service to our member Leagues and will charge a rate to cover the cost of preparation and printing. Margo Reeg is in charge.

It was heartening to learn that the State Library has provided grant funding to produce the Easy Voter Guide for the June primary, although a limited quantity. Recent state budget cuts have impacted the State Library. It is good to know that there are still some funds available for public services. As we go into the primary election, remember to promote Smart Voter as a reliable resource for election information. Many of you have contributed financially to ensure that Smart Voter is available to the public. Smart Voter relies on contributions from Leagues, individuals and foundations. If you're League has not been a contributor, please consider putting a contribution in your budget for the coming year.

Save July 28 for our traditional “Popovers in Pasadena” program.

*Nancy Mahr*

**Don't Forget the LWV/LA County Convention**

**March 31, 2012**

**10:00AM - 2:00PM**

**at**

**Pickwick Gardens, Burbank**

## **UCLA HEALTH REFORM SYMPOSIUM**

**February 8, 2012**

**By Pat Colby, LWV Palos Verdes Peninsula**

The February 8, 2012 health reform symposium at UCLA had a two-fold purpose: the first, to celebrate the work of retiring founder and director of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, E Richard Brown, and the second, to introduce a panel of health leaders to discuss aspects of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.

### **UCLA CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH**

The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, established in 1994, evolved from the recognition that little evidence-based health data was available to policy makers, health experts, legislators, advocacy groups, state agencies and foundations and health workers on-the-ground. Among the many successes accomplished by the Center, it is the development of the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), now the nation's largest health survey, conducted every two years on a wide range of health topics that is the Center's most prominent achievement. The survey's data gives a detailed picture of health and health care needs of California's large and diverse populations; it is especially known for its hard-to-find data on ethnic sub-groups. Topics covered include asthma, diabetes, obesity, immigrant health and the number of Californians with health insurance. This data is shared in easy-to-read free statistical compilations and reports by county, region and state; the Center's aim-- to inform and educate those seeking appropriate information to make justifiable, fact-based policy on health care reform, health insurance coverage, chronic diseases and health disparities across a broad range of health topics. Data derived from the CHIS has informed important health care reform decisions in California. E. Richard Brown was also a prominent health care resource in both the Clinton and Obama administrations. Gerald F. Kominski is the Center's new director.

### **PANEL DISCUSSION**

#### **WHAT IS "HEALTH CARE REFORM"?**

The federal health care law is comprised of two pieces of legislation that President Obama signed into law in March, 2010: The Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act.

The new law is predicated on the principle of shared responsibility—it requires health plans and insurers to provide access to insurance to individuals regardless of their health status, age or occupation; it requires government to set the rules for the marketplace and to support access to affordable coverage for our low income residents, and, it requires individuals, families and communities to assume more responsibility to manage their health and be more involved in health care decisions.

#### **Key elements (many of which go into effect in 2014) include:**

- New rules in the health insurance market designed to improve coverage and protect patients.
- Creation of state-based health insurance exchanges to make it easier to shop for and buy insurance using federal tax credits to be made available to:
  - Small businesses with fewer than 25 employees who have low-to-moderate incomes, and
  - Individuals and families earning up to 400 percent of federal poverty level (In 2010 \$43,300 for an individual and \$88,200 for a family of four).
- Incentives to promote health care quality, care-coordination and preventive care
- Expansion of the Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) program to all citizens and qualifying immigrants who earn up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level

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- Grants and incentives to extend access to primary care, build the health care workforce and improve prevention and quality of health care
- A requirement that businesses with more than 50 employees provide affordable coverage or pay a fee.
- New taxes on certain health sector businesses, high-income families, and high cost health plans

**WHAT IS CALIFORNIA DOING TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW LAW?**

- Improving access to private health insurance for persons with pre-existing medical conditions who have been denied insurance in the past or offered only unaffordable options.
- Improving the quality and security of private health insurance by enforcing new federal insurance laws (clarity, consistency and greater accountability for consumers, businesses and insurance plans).
- Developing a Health Benefit Exchange to make it easier for individuals to shop for and buy insurance.
- Focusing on prevention and wellness.

**WHAT ARE THE KEY ACTIONS BEING TAKEN BY THE STATE?**

- State departments and agencies are aggressively pursuing grants under the Affordable Health Care Act (ACA) across program areas from prevention to public health infrastructure to insurance plan rate review.
- As implementation of the new law progresses, federal agencies have requested comments on draft rules and policies. State departments and agencies are analyzing the draft rules and providing comments to the federal government with a focus on ensuring that states have resources and flexibility to responsibly implement the new law.
- The state has implemented the California “Bridge to Reform”-- A Medicaid Demonstration Waiver (Section 1115), which makes up roughly \$8 billion in federal Medicaid matching funds available to the state over a five year period. The funds expand coverage to low-income uninsured adults and preserve and improve the county-based safety-net. The waiver also allows the state to enroll Medicaid-eligible seniors and persons with disabilities into managed care plans that meet specified readiness and network adequacy requirements. So far 10 of the 47 counties participating in the “Bridge” program have registered 250,000 low-income residents who are now enabled to receive free care at their local public clinics and hospitals.

**WILL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS BENEFIT FROM THE NEW LAW?**

- Federal law prohibits the use of federal funds to provide health care services to undocumented immigrants.
- Federal law requires hospitals to provide care to anyone needing emergency services regardless of citizenship, legal status or ability to pay.

**WHAT ACA ARGUMENTS WILL THE SUPREME COURT HEAR IN MARCH?**

**NOTE:** From March 26-28, 2012 the Supreme Court will hear six hours of oral argument—the longest scheduled arguments in the court’s modern history.

- The individual mandate’s constitutionality (two hours)
- The provision’s severability from the rest of the law (90 minutes)
- The health care reform’s Medicaid expansion (one hour)
- Debate whether this case is ripe for consideration, given that the provision in question has not come into effect (90 minutes)

May 12, 2012 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Pasadena City College, Harbeson Hall  
1570 E. Colorado Boulevard (just east of Hill Ave.), Pasadena 91106

# 2012 Conference on California & National Health Care...



## Keynote Speakers

**Anthony Wright**

Executive Director of Health Access California

**Don McCanne, MD**

Senior Health Policy Fellow  
Physicians for a National Health Program

**Registration Deadline 5/9/12**

Space is limited. To register, phone  
LWV-Pasadena Area: 626-798-0965.

**Parking** at Staff Lot on Hill, \$2  
or free street parking on Colorado



**We wish to thank the following generous sponsors:**  
 Health Care for All: San Gabriel Valley, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara;  
 League of Women Voters: Pasadena Area, Los Angeles, L.A. County ILO, Burbank/Glendale,  
 Claremont Area, Santa Monica, & San Bernardino; Ellen Lieberman, MD, Memorial;  
 Ecumenical Council Pasadena Area Congregations; Press for Democracy; All Saints Church;  
 San Gabriel Valley Pharmacists Association; and TRUUdesigns.





# May 2012 Conference on California & National Health Care.... Where Are We Now?

## Program

- 9:00 a.m.                    **Registration & Coffee**
- 9:30-10:10 a.m.        **Anthony Wright, Keynote Address:**  
*Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act (ACA), What It Is and What It Isn't*
- 10:10-10:30              **Don McCanne, MD, Commentary and Dialogue:**  
*Pluses & Minuses of the ACA Compared to Medicare for All*
- 10:30-10:45.            **Recess & Refreshments**
- 10:45-12:00              **Capsule Discussions**
- 10:45                      ***Not-So-Scary Truth about Medicare/Medicaid Funding***  
(Medicare Advantage, Medi-gap Policies, etc.)  
**Bruce Hector, M.D., PNHP**
- 11:05                      ***California's Federal Waiver Requirements to pass Universal Healthcare (SB810) Before 2017:*** Review of federal bills, California's 4 deliverables, & Vermont's experience.  
**Doris Nelson, League of Women Voters**
- 11:25                      ***Why Do We Need SB810?*** Cost and Quality of Care in the USA  
Compared to Other OECD Universal Care Countries  
**Sally Seven, Health Care for All**
- 11:45                      ***How Do we Get It?*** Role of the Premium Commission in SB810, California  
Universal Healthcare Act, & Lewin Group Finance System Report  
**King Reilly, M.D., PNHP**
- 12:00 - 12:30            **Summary and Conclusions**  
**Video: *Joining the Movement to Win Universal Healthcare in California;***  
**Georgia Brewer, Volunteer Chair, Campaign for a Healthy California**



## NOTES FROM THE WATER COOLER CONFERENCE

By Joanne Levitt, LWVC Legislative Consultant for Education and Prevention/Early Intervention

I was pleased to represent the LWVC at a joint conference on early childhood issues sponsored by First 5 California and the Advancement Project on February 8-9. The first day, lead by First 5, was titled *INVESTMENTS IN EARLY LEARNING: Let Evidence Lead the Way* focused on the what and the second day, lead by the Advancement Project was *STRONGER TOGETHER: Winning Our Children's Future* or the how of doing this, the advocacy piece.

Much was inspiring, dozens of good quotes, but I want to focus on three themes that seemed to come up in almost every discussion—different expressions but the same idea and they all tie together.

The first theme that went through both days and almost every speaker was the idea of the whole child and the child in the community. Having college and career-ready young people at the end of the educational pipeline starts with adequate prenatal care and continues with home visitation programs, quality infant and toddler care (either home based or center), good preschool programs and continues through kindergarten and the primary grades.

Communities need to work together in a continuum through all of these programs, breaking down the silos between age levels and programs. Healthcare and nutrition, mental health and emotional readiness, cognitive learning and academic progress are all related. It is the same child whatever the service being delivered. There is a need to focus on the alignment of the programs, each one building on the one before, both complementary and interdependent, but that can't happen without communication. Programs need to consider not

only the whole child but also, often, the whole family. This isn't easy, as it requires crossing governmental agency lines, funding streams and interest areas or "turf."

Sometimes it is not only "What Works" but also "Who Cares." The focus was on the quality of services across domains; on people (including parents) knowing child development, understanding the importance of play, how children learn; on all service providers having respect for the family—whatever the family is—in any of many ways. There was an understanding that this won't happen overnight, but communities can start moving in that direction. Along with this, there is a need for greater understanding of the cost savings in special education, repeated grades and other remedial programs when delays are caught early, problems addressed and children enter K-12 schools ready to learn (which relates to theme three). Related to this and frequently mentioned was the need to quit pitting 0-5 against K-12 for funding; it should be a continuum, not either/or.

The second theme, and this is not in order of importance, was poverty. This came up in almost every discussion. With more children in true poverty, both food and housing insecure, it is even more important to address these issues. Poverty is inter-generational and young people have less chance to break the barrier now than in years past. Those who did not have a positive educational experience during their school years are now parenting in poverty. They need every bit of assistance we can give and, if we hope to break the cycle, it starts with early years, before birth with adequate prenatal

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## Notes from the Water Cooler Conference

care and nutrition. And it continues as the child grows and family needs change.

These supports work in two ways: early learning programs help children to move into their academic career ready to learn, where they have lower failure rates, less grade retention, and lower dropout rates. And government supported early childhood programs offer young parents, often single mothers, an opportunity to attend school and/or work to help break out of their poverty.

More and more, current research is showing the impact of poverty on young children, not just nutritional deficiencies and poor health care, but also the effects of poverty-induced stress on the developing brain. Young children with symptoms much like those of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) victims. Obviously, this affects academic achievement and furthers inter-generational poverty. One speaker called this “An Inconvenient Truth” and it is not a popular item of discussion. This is supposed to be the land of opportunity where every generation does better than their parents’ generation. While we need to hold schools accountable, we also need to realize that schools cannot do it alone, not even when the goals of theme one are met. One speaker called for more adult engagement with the economic reality faced by many of our children and their families. Raising more revenue to meet these goals cannot be the untouchable third rail.

Sterling Speirn, President and CEO of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation best summed up the third theme, saying, “It is wonderful what we can do when we are always doing.” Simple, but something we need to remember. The theme is to keep telling our story.

Rob Reiner said, “People don’t really understand this (the importance of early childhood education); we need to keep talking until they get it. Kids are at the back of the bus...politicians think in four to eight year

terms, what happens on their watch.” In this era of term limits, most will have moved on long before today’s four-year-old is applying to college or looking for a job. Reiner also quoted Richard Nixon saying, “when you are sick and tired of telling the story over and over and over is when you just might be beginning to get through to someone.”

This is something we all can do. Tell our part of the story. Many have access to evidence and studies and statistics, but that is not how decisions are made. Those making the decisions need to hear real stories of people they can relate to, people like you and me and them.

These are all areas where the League is in a good place to advocate. We have positions at either the state or national level to support every need expressed. There are many voices for young children, but they are still divided and segmented. There is health and parenting and childcare for working mothers and early education. Head Start and state preschool and after school programs for primary children. Each is A voice, but what is needed is one voice that says it all is important and needs to be integrated and work together for the good of all children. Because we are a multi-issue organization, this seems a natural. Raising healthy, productive citizens for the future of our country is something on which we can all agree.



The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County in both its values and practices affirms its belief and commitment to diversity, pluralism and affirmative action.

The League of Women Voters welcomes new members, both men and women, who are citizens of voting age. Associate membership is open to all others.

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**Internet Election Resources**

**Smart Voter** [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)

Statewide propositions plus local candidates & issues on your ballot, with extensive

Background materials and media links from LWV California Ed Fund

**LA County Registrar-Recorder** [www.lavote.net](http://www.lavote.net)

Election calendar, polling place look-up, absentee voting info, multilingual voting materials, Locations for Touchscreen early voting

**Easy Voter Guide** [www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org)

Concise facts on statewide propositions; Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, and English

**Secretary of State** [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)

Official text of ballot measures

**CA Legislative Analyst** [www.lao.ca.gov](http://www.lao.ca.gov)

Analysis of all ballot measures

**CA Voter Foundation** [www.calvoter.org](http://www.calvoter.org)

Data on campaign contributions to candidates and measures

**CA Budget Project** [www.cbp.org](http://www.cbp.org)

Analyzes the fiscal effects of statewide ballot measures

This **VOTER** is ready for viewing on our website: [www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org)



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