

**Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Los Angeles Regional Network Meeting
March 24, 2005**

Meeting Minutes

Welcoming Remarks: **Lupe Alonzo-Diaz**, Executive Director, Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Jennifer Rodriguez, Health Policy Coordinator, Alliance for a Better Community
Castulo de la Rocha, CEO, AltaMed Health Services

Ms. Alonzo-Diaz opened the meeting and reviewed the goals and objectives of the Los Angeles Regional Network. The agenda for the March 24th meeting of the Network was recommended by the Los Angeles Regional Network Advisory Committee. This Committee was established as a result of the initial organizing meeting of the Regional Network in September 2004. The presentations and discussions during this March meeting will be used to continue to develop and refine the local Latino health agenda and to develop action steps for the local network.

Ms. Rodriguez briefly described the Alliance for a Better Community's (ABC) partnership and collaboration with the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California (LCHC).

Mr. De la Rocha provided the opening remarks. He noted that many of the health care issues in Latino communities have remained consistent over the years but, for the first time, Latinos have political access to key elected officials that represent the Latino communities at both the local and State levels. Since 1992, the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California has been working at the State level to inform public policy, advocate for Latino health care issues and support research and community education. More recently, these efforts have been expanded at the local level with the organization of regional networks. These regional networks bring together a broad array of individuals and organizations concerned with Latino health care issues and fosters non-traditional partnerships to identify and prioritize these local needs.

Statewide Latino Health Issues: **Patty Diaz**, Director, Latino Coalition for a Healthy California

Ms. Diaz presented a State budget and legislative update¹. The work of LCHC is primarily focused on the following issues:

- Access to health care
 - Expanding coverage to all children
 - Structural changes to public health programs, specifically Medi-Cal and Bi-national Border Health
 - Reduction of prescription drug prices

¹ A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available on the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California website at www.LCHC.org

- Health disparities
 - Increasing availability of culturally/linguistically competent services
 - Increasing the number of Latinos in the health care workforce
- Community health
 - Chronic disease prevention, specifically regarding obesity, cervical cancer and HIV/AIDs

The budget issues most affecting Latinos are²:

- Medi-Cal redesign
 - Mandatory expansion to all Medi-Cal categories
 - Premiums for some beneficiaries
 - Capping adult dental benefits
- Bi-national Border Health
 - Possible elimination of the office located in San Diego

Legislative efforts of note include³:

- Expansion of Health Coverage to Children
 - AB772 (Chan)
 - SB437 (Escutia)
- Decreasing Childhood Obesity
 - SB12 (Escutia) – LCHC is a co-sponsor of this bill to prohibit the sale of junk food in public schools
 - SB965
 - LCHC, in partnership with UCLA, is developing a policy brief in this area as well
- Increasing Latino Health Professionals
 - Senator Ortiz is holding hearings on this matter
 - LCHC will be working on a Master Plan, looking at Statewide efforts

**Panel #1: Access to Health Care: Jennifer Kattlove, Senior Health Policy Advocate, The Children's Partnership
Patty Diaz, Policy Director, LCHC**

Ms. Kattlove presented the 100% Campaign's proposal "Californian's for Healthy Kids" and also reported on the status of the effort to date⁴. The goal of the proposal is to pass legislation that "provide(s) affordable insurance for all uninsured children". The Governor has indicated that he wants to cover all children and there are several successful local efforts that provide a model of how a statewide measure may be achieved. While many details still need to be worked out, the proposal leverages what is in place such as electronic eligibility/enrollment, Healthy Families and employer-based coverage options. Overall financing, creating incentives for

² Refer to LCHC **Budget Analysis, February 2005** meeting handout, for more details

³ Refer to LCHC **Monthly Policy Update, February 2005** meeting handout, for more details

⁴ A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available on the LCHC website at www.LCHC.org

employers to participate and coverage for young adults ages 19 and 20 are still the toughest issues that need to be solved. To date, SB437 and AB772 have been introduced as spot bills.

Ms. Diaz highlighted the following two elements of the Medi-Cal redesign proposal⁵:

- **Premiums**
Monthly premiums will be established for families and children in households with incomes above 100% of FPL and, for seniors and persons with disabilities with incomes above the SSI/SSP level. A waiver application for federal approval is required.

The impact on Latinos of instituting premiums for Medi-Cal will be significant. More than one in three Latinos live below the FPL and studies show that even when premiums are low, as in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (Healthy Families), many families cannot afford the premiums or have reported periodic trouble paying premiums.

- **Dental benefit cap for adults**
Adult dental benefits will be limited to \$1,000 in a 12-month period, excluding federally mandated dental services.

A recent study reported that low-income Latino households are four times more likely to have severely decayed teeth than non-Latino whites. Oral health is critical to overall health because untreated dental disease can cause other health problems. Limiting dental benefits will make an existing epidemic still more dramatic.

Recommended Action:

- Contact the Governor's Office and other State and local elected officials and oppose premiums for Medi-Cal and the dental benefit cap
- Identify local families/individuals that can provide personal stories that illustrate the impact of these redesign elements.

Audience Comments:

Californian's for Healthy Kids' proposal:

- Utilize the 1 e-app for enrollment and coordinate eligibility screening with other gateway programs
- Support a legislative change of the community rating requirement used by health insurers to underwrite employer-based policies; facilitate premium setting that is affordable to small employers

Medi-Cal Resign:

- Examine issues affecting the elderly
 - Home health care benefits
 - Co-payments

⁵ A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available on the LCHC website at www.LCHC.org. Refer also to LCHC's analysis of the Medi-Cal Redesign.

- Support a press conference to highlight the issues with Medi-Cal redesign

Latino Workforce:

- Support legislative changes that reduce barriers to entry of foreign-trained health practitioners, including physicians, nurses and others
- Request the State nurse licensing agency to:
 - Increase the number of reviewers (for applications submitted by foreign-trained nursing professionals)
 - Evaluate existing educational requirements against equivalent foreign requirements
- Conduct local advocacy among medical schools to seek foundation funding that encourages students to pursue foreign exchange training in Latino countries

Panel #2: Obesity and Chronic Conditions: **Maria Reza**, Asst. Superintendent of Health and Human Services, LAUSD
Amy Dresser Held, Director of Policy and Communications, LA School Board Vice President Marlene Canter

Ms. Reza presented an overview of LAUSD's Coordinated School Health program and a progress update of accomplishments. Coordinated School Health (CSH) is a program of the Centers for Disease Control and is a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of students. CSH is comprised of eight components:

- Health Education
- Physical Education
- Health Services
- Nutrition Services
- Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services
- Healthy School Environment
- Health Promotion for Staff
- Family/Community Involvement

This program is designed to enhance academic achievement by providing students with healthy, safe and nurturing school environments. LAUSD is participating in the national program and has established a district council. To date, an initial baseline assessment has been completed to determine the school's health index against each of the eight components listed above. Action plans will be developed to aid schools with improvements to the health index baselines.

Other key accomplishments highlighted by Ms. Reza included:

- LAUSD Board's passage of a healthy beverages resolution, banning the sale of sodas
- Supporting the Federal Child Nutrition guidelines
 - Banning "junk food" sales

- Establishing a district office of Physical Education
- Participation in the Federal Lunch Program, where approximately 75% of enrolled students qualify
 - The basic program is in place but more work is needed to promote and track actual consumption of healthy food alternatives that are well balanced for students
- Pursuit of various grants to fund physical education, promotion of better nutrition, and other health-related efforts
- Partnership with community organizations on targeted health promotion/disease prevention efforts

Ms. Held provided an update on the district's obesity prevention efforts. To date, the district's policies on healthy beverages and food are considered a success and are being replicated by others. These policies are credited with a decrease in discipline problems. Some implementation challenges still need to be refined including:

- Communication of policies and guidelines to staff, students and parents
- Engagement/adoption of new practices
- Enforcement that is systematic and not just ad hoc as is now occurring

LAUSD is supporting SB12 and SB 965 with amendments:

- Include wrap-arounds for nutrition and physical education
- Address funding raising alternatives to replace monies lost from banned food sales/vendors

The next focus area will include increasing the variety and availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria and at home by:

- Hosting farmer's markets on school campuses
- Encouraging/"partnering" with affordable, health-oriented grocers such as Trader Joe's

Recommended Action:

- Continue to keep pressure at the State level with the Governor and legislature
- Identify opportunities to include nutrition/health education in science curricula
- Advocate for longer meal breaks to give students ample time to eat
- Advocate for funding of physical education teachers
- Support accelerating the establishment of local school health councils; use community resources to get this going
- Provide support to community-based organizations with grant writing training, resource referral network, information on internship opportunities, etc.

Audience Comments:

- Establish a local health committee at Banning High School
 - Identify local advocate/facilitator to organize the effort
 - Encourage the local schools to leverage their local community resources

- Encourage dialog/effort among groups of local schools to support/sustain the Healthy Start program
 - Pursue grants and other funds from local community sources (i.e., businesses, sport franchises, etc.)
- NHF would like more information on licensing requirements for day care centers; the community needs more affordable options
- Need to shift away from centralized school structure and move head start programs into the community with child-care providers
- Promotoras need more detailed information regarding affordable community options for fitness, child care, availability of healthy foods/markets, etc.
 - A local fitness program started by a promotora – Mujeres en Movimiento (Women in Movement) uses school resources to provide women in the community with options for physical activity

Panel #3: Health Education: Abigail Soto, Community Organizer, Children’s Planning Council SPA 4

Melinda Cordero, Director, Network of Promotoras and Community Health Workers, Vision y Compromiso

Ms. Cordero briefly described the work of Vision y Compromiso as a first effort to begin to better organize promotoras statewide. Vision y Compromiso is also looking at inviting related grass-roots organizations to participate and to begin efforts in advocacy and community mobilization. The goal is to create sustainable community change. This is still an evolving effort.

The work of promotoras facilitates spread of many existing health-related education resources; leveraging these existing resources increases the effectiveness of achieving better informed communities and of increasing adoption of healthy actions by individuals.

Ms. Soto reviewed the work she is doing with the Children’s Planning Council SPA 4. One objective of the children’s planning council is to support safe, healthy, nurturing environments for children. This includes good health, emotional well-being, safety and workforce readiness. Specifically, Ms. Soto is focused on supporting local efforts to inform and enroll children in the Healthy Kids Initiative to provide health coverage for all children.

Recommended Actions:

- Emphasize integration with the local committee of Vision y Compromiso to advance the work of promotoras

Audience Comments:

- LCHC should support the structural organization of promotoras statewide to ensure promotoras are kept at the table