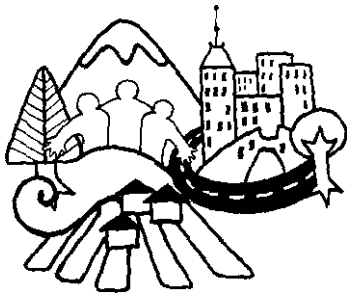


FRESNO METRO MINISTRY

NEWS AND VIEWS



MARCH 2002

43,000 FRESNO CHILDREN MAY LOSE HEALTH CARE SERVICES

By Laurie Primavera,
Metro Health Policy
Project Coordinator

More than 900,000 California children—including 43,000 in Fresno County— will lose access to free health care services on July 1, 2002 in Governor Gray Davis' fiscal year 2003 budget proposal to eliminate a \$122 million health care program.

The Child Health and Disability Prevention program (CHDP), established in 1993, provides free childhood vaccinations, physical examinations and laboratory services, dental care, smoking cessation and other preventive care services to children in families with annual incomes up to 200% of the poverty levels. Because of the significant budget deficit the state is confronting, Governor Davis has targeted this vital program for extinction.

Basically the administration has proposed eliminating a public health infrastructure and not putting anything in its place. Governor Davis' proposal falsely assumes that children will enroll in Healthy Families or Medi-Cal. Thousands of children are simply not eligible or not enrolled and there is no mechanism to get these kids into Medi-Cal or Healthy Families. The budget proposal falsely assumes that access to health care for these children will be maintained.

CHDP funding supports undocumented children who cannot qualify for Medi-Cal or

Healthy Families. It is one of the few preventive programs for children that covers services through private physicians, licensed community clinics, school-based clinics and others. 6,000 medical providers in California who currently treat these children will be reduced to 400, greater than a ten-fold decrease. Health centers will be forced to provide a higher level of uncompensated care and schools will lose funding that now supports these services on site.

Without this program, Fresno County will be faced with an enormous number of children without insurance. Fresno County has approximately 43,000 children enrolled in CHDP and is one of the largest CHDP counties in the State. The impact to Fresno County will be devastating.

To express your opinion, write, call or email the Governor at Governor Davis, 1st Floor State Capitol, Sacramento, Ca. 95814; 916-445-2845; governor@governor.ca.gov. My opinion is that cutting CHDP is penny-wise, pound-foolish, as we will all pay more for treating illnesses and disabilities rather than paying for early detection and prevention. There is no more expensive care than emergency care. Cutting CHDP is sure to cost taxpayers more.

OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF FRESNO COUNTY'S PUBLIC HEALTH CAPACITY: BASIS FOR FUTURE DECISIONS ABOUT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER POSITION

David Dent, Director of Fresno County's Human Services System, announced at the January Community Health Care Roundtable that the County would contract with Bruce Pomer Associates for an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the County's Public Health Capacity. Dent had met Pomer earlier at a meeting of Metro's Local Health Care Coalition's Public Health Officer Task Force. Pomer is President of the Public Health Officers Association of California and heads a private consulting firm that has conducted assessments of several California county's public health department capacity.

Dent invited Metro's Task Force and Roundtable participants to work with the County in utilizing the results of this assessment in planning for the future role and structure for a County Public Health Officer. Metro's Task Force will be expanded for this purpose. The Task Force has researched the role and structure of the Public Health Officer position in a variety of Counties. The Task Force has learned that the best-trained pro-active individual could not be effective unless the County organizational structure is developed to promote and secure that effectiveness.

Currently, the elected Coroner/Public Guardian serves in the appointed position of Public Health Officer. The Public Health Officer must be a physician; the Coroner does not. Metro has always advocated for a full-time Public Health Officer to be pro-active in health care access and public health issues. "We look forward to this cooperative and collaborative effort with Fresno County," reflects Metro Director Walt Parry. "An objective assessment of our County's public health strengths and weaknesses will serve well in helping us move forward together", Walt added.

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NEWSLETTER

Carla Jo Dakin, Editor
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**CALENDAR OF METRO EVENTS
IN MARCH AND APRIL**

- 3/13 Hunger & Nutrition Forum, noon, Trinity Lutheran Church, 3973 N. Cedar Ave., Fresno, Ca (south of Ashlan, north of Dakota, on west side of Cedar, near Ashlan exit of freeway 168)
- 3/21 Community Health Care Roundtable, 7:30 a.m. Trinity Lutheran Church (see address above)
- 3/21 Metro Board of Directors dinner meeting, 5:30 p.m., Metro office
- 4/10 Hunger & Nutrition Forum, noon, Trinity Lutheran Church (see address above)
- 4/18 Community Health Care Roundtable, 7:30 a.m., Trinity Lutheran Church (see address above)

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Metro supports the following community activities and invites your attendance and support.

- 3/8 FORUM: "Rise of Radical Islamic Movements in the Middle East", Dr. A Matin-Asgari, Dept of History/Islamic Studies, CSU, LA, Fresno State, University Center, Room 200, 2-3:30 p.m. Free. 3rd in the Series on topics re: Middle East.
- 3/9 CHILD CARE CONFERENCE, sponsored by California Council of Churches.
- 3/14 FORUM: "The Media and Afghan Women", Dr. N. Gallagher, Dept Middle East History, UCSB, Fresno State, University Center, Room 200, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Free. (4th in the Series.)
- 3/15 LANGUAGE ACCESS CONFERENCE, Radisson Hotel, Sequoia Ballroom, 9:00-3:30, sponsored by Health Consumer

Center, Project of Central California Legal Services, with Asian Pacific Islander & American Health Forum. Contact: May Vang, (559) 570-1218.

- 3/16 "RALLY IN THE VALLEY" FOR PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: at Courthouse Park, downtown Fresno, at Van Ness Ave and Fresno St., 1-3 pm. This free speech event is a call to action for our community and to those who wish to express issues of concern, while sending a message to our elected officials. Some of the issues to be addressed are civil rights, health and safety, transportation, unemployment, and much more. Speakers, music, info tables, and more. To participate or for more info, call Vincent Lavery (559) 439-0821.
- 3/19-21 CESAR E. CHAVEZ WEEK OF SERVICE & LEARNING, sponsored by Fresno Adult School, Cesar Chavez Campus, downtown Fresno, activities open to the public, for information, visit website: www.fresnoadultschool.com, or call (559) 457-6000.
- 3/19-20 HMONG HEALTH & ECONOMIC ISSUES FORUM at CSU, Fresno. Focus is on Central Valley Hmong residents, their particular health and economic concerns. Join educators, program heads, healthcare practitioners and other community professionals for this collaborative effort. Speakers: Dr. Luo Jun of Guizhou Medical College, Guiyang, China; Dr. Peter Kundstadter, UCSF; Marilyn Mochel, RN, CDE of Health House; Dr. Leng Mouanoutoua, Fresno Co. Health & Human Services. Registration: call the Rios Co., 559-485-1320.
- 4/25 FORUM and Luncheon: "The State of the Union Since September 11", J. Lafferty, National Lawyers Guild, Fresno State, Residential Dining Facility, 12-1:30 p.m. (5th in the Series.) Call Dr. J. Echeverria 278-6639.



**“VALLEY AIR BRINGS HEALTH DESPAIR”
TOPIC FOR MARCH 21 COMMUNITY HEALTH
CARE ROUNDTABLE**

Come hear Kevin Hamilton, RRT, Program Coordinator of Community Medical Center’s Asthma Education Program, as he provides us with the basics and the science on how the Valley air is affected by both particulates and ozone problems. A respiratory therapist, Hamilton will also address the long-term serious health effects and what can be done. We will have an opportunity for questions and discussion during his presentation. Also presenting will be a speaker for Kaiser Cares For Kids, discussing an insurance program that has recently reduced its premiums from \$35 to \$15 a month.

The April 18 Roundtable will continue the discussion on air pollution focusing on the steps needed to develop and implement a plan to significantly reduce the pollution that has such a negative and long-term impact on Valley residents. Representatives of Fresno County and the City of Fresno will be the presenters. It is also anticipated that a representative of the American Lung Association will speak.

Community Health Care Roundtables are held the third Thursday of every month from 7:30 a.m. through 9:30 a.m. at Trinity Lutheran

Church, 3973 N. Cedar Avenue in Fresno. A complimentary continental breakfast is included. All are invited. Read the Roundtable sessions Notes, posted on Metro Ministry’s website at www.fresnometroministry.org (also available by e-mail, or printed report).

**HEALTHY CHOICES AT SEQUOIA
IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

By Christina Ledesma,
Metro Intern,
Masters Public Health

Through its advocacy on Hunger issues facing our valley, Metro takes an avid interest in sharing healthy changes in local food policy. Sequoia Middle School of Fresno Unified School District presents an example to emulate. About two years ago, administrators and teachers thought they’d probably lose money when they decided to sell nutritious snacks at school, but instead they have earned more money. Moreover, expulsions and suspensions have decreased significantly.

Sequoia Middle School has kicked soda, candy and chips off campus and replaced these items with snacks for kids with nutritional value. Teachers raised money for their classroom activities without selling soda and candy. “You can feel the difference on campus, and we think that the change in food, having a nutritious campus, has made a difference,” says Principal Maureen Moore, “there is a decrease in violence and half the number of suspensions and expulsions.” In the 1999-2000 school year there were 13 expulsions, last year there were 6



expulsions. The change began as an experiment in the 2000-01 school year after kids began asking, "Why do we have to eat maple bars for breakfast?" The Parents Site Council listened to their concerns and together with help from teacher Jennifer Jordan and School Nurse Jean Newkirk, Moore was able to commit faculty support.

The school is certified as a 'Provision 2' school— all children are provided a breakfast and lunch through federal funding. The food service has changed to serving hot breakfasts and cereals, not maple bars or donuts. Sequoia Middle School has the largest Summer Lunch Program in Fresno Unified. It is committed to feeding children whether they are in school or out on vacation. More importantly, Sequoia changed its contract with Pepsi. More healthy bottled water and sports drinks replaced sodas. The snack bar has made twice the expected amount of money. In the 1999-00 school year it made \$55 per day. In 2000-01, it made \$125 per day. For more information contact Principal Maureen Moore at (559) 457-3210, Sequoia Middle School, 4050 E. Hamilton Avenue, Fresno, CA 93702.

METRO STAFF CHANGES

Metro is growing. We are accepting applications for three full time staff positions, funded by recent grants, in March 2002. The positions are Fund Developer, Environmental Health and Outreach person, and Hunger/Nutrition Project Assistant. Read the job announcements on our website, www.fresnometroministry.org. Review of applications will begin March 11, 2002.

Metro is pleased to announce that Lisa Schave has recently been hired as full time Administrative Assistant. She had been working in a temporary assignment with us, and we are pleased to have her on board as a full time Metro staff member.

The Metro Board welcomed its newest member, Jeremy Hofer, musician and community worker with California Rural Legal Assistance, in January 2002.

31 YEARS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY: HIGHLIGHTS OF METRO'S SECOND ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

Fresno's hottest ticket of the year was the one that took you to Metro's 31st Anniversary Awards Dinner. Delicious food, beautiful music, and inspiring people— honorees and 350+ attendees—created a remarkable evening, December 6, 2001, in Hope Lutheran's spacious hall. Recognizing their bold leadership in community building, Metro honored Claudia Martinez, Luisa Medina, Jeff Ponting, Paul White, College Community Congregational Church, and FUSD's Sequoia Middle School.

Supervisor Juan Arambula spoke about Luisa Medina's courageous voice for justice. Politically astute, "she knows the history, she knows the players in our community, she knows where the bodies are buried." Rev. Walt Parry quipped that the reason she knows where they are buried is that she put a few there herself. Juan talked of Luisa's 25 years of dedication to the improvement of the quality of life for people in Fresno, especially for children and families. Luisa currently works for Central California Legal Services, Inc as development director.

Jeff Ponting, Directing Attorney of Migrant Services, California Rural Legal Assistance, spoke from the heart about workers. In 1995 the federal government instituted Operation Gatekeeper. The plan was not so much to stop border crossings because low paid workers are in demand. Ponting asserted that it was known at the time that the policy would force people into the mountains east of San Diego to cross through the desert. Far more people have died crossing the border in the San Diego sector in the last seven years than died in escaping East Germany. There has been more than 1 death a day. He said, "I am angry, and I think we all are, about a calculated policy to kill people who want to come to this country to work." Santiago Ventura, Coalicion Oaxaqueno Bi-Nacional, speaking in Mixteco, praised Jeff's egalitarian approach to CRLA's client community. His work on behalf of the Oaxaqueno community in the central valley has left a lasting impression.

Metro's Rev. Ken Smiley described College Community Congregational Church as a committed longtime sustainer of Metro's work. Through its people and resources, College has kept Metro in its budget through thick and thin. The church's Rev. Lou Parks said the church inspired her faith because she "did not have to leave her brain at the door." The congregation has long been a "voice of equality, a voice of reason, and a voice of dissent when human liberty was threatened by the majority."

Mrs. Paul White, eloquently introduced her husband, saying, "Paul White is pure gold—forged in poverty, tempered in love, polished by faith." Rev. Walt Parry noted Paul White's long-term commitment, "his collaborative, supportive nature, his friendly and gracious manner, and his attitude of 'we can work this out' that is very helpful in a community like ours." Paul White has been responsible for innovative programs at the Economic Opportunities Commission, while serving on boards at local, state and national levels that aim to help people in poverty. He noted the many needs in Fresno are still to be met—the homeless, the hungry, and the folks who lack healthcare. "We believers have an obligation to bear the infirmities of the weak and if we fail to do that we will be held accountable. When I pass, I want my children's children to be able to look back and know that in a little way, in a humble way, that I tried to do my part."

Metro recognized Sequoia Middle School for its taking the lead at FUSD in kicking junk food off campus in favor of healthy snacks, said Metro's Edie Jessup. Advocating good nutrition at school has meant students are less antsy and pose fewer discipline problems. School leaders have revamped food policies throughout—in the cafeteria, snack bar, classrooms and vending machines. Accepting the award were the healthy food initiators PE teacher Jennifer Jordan, Nurse Jean Newkirk and Principal Maureen Moore.

Walt Parry lauded Claudia Martinez's impact on Fresno and the central valley, and her commitment to helping young people secure higher education in her work at UCMerced. She has contributed greatly as president of Metro's

Board of Directors. Dean Ben Cuellar, CSUF College of Health and Human Services, told of his attempts to lure Claudia to come work at CSUF—he's still trying! Claudia spent countless hours thinking about how UCMerced could assure community input, so that the community could share in the project's benefits and shape it to serve local needs.

Rev. Parry summed up the anniversary event, "Look around you, friends, in our diverse ways, together we can build a community that protects the basic rights and freedoms of all our residents."

AWARDS DINNER — THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS FOR CREATING A MEMORABLE EVENT AND FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Metro's Board of Directors sincerely thanks the Fresno Community for its support over the years, and especially in making this second annual event a successful reality. Fundraising is vital to our programs—only a few are aided by grants. We are grateful to the folks who helped in so many ways—and this list acknowledges our supporters.

Planning Committee: Mary Ellen Clay, Mindy Rose, Monica Blanco, Edie Jessup, Lisa Schave, Megan Gean, Rosillo Placencia, Belen Macias, Eva Ortega, Ge Yang, Sheng Vang, Chansamon Chaleunrath, Rev. Walt Parry.

Donors, Advertisers, Purchasers of Tables:
Benefactor (\$5000): The California Endowment; **Champion (\$2500):** St Agnes Medical Center; **Advocates (\$1000):** Central California Faculty Medical Group, Kaiser Permanente, Rios Company; **Friends of Metro (\$500):** Central California Legal Services, Community Medical Centers, Proteus Inc., CSUF College of Health and Human Services, Wesley United Methodists, California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA). **Ads/Tables:** Juan Arambula, Rev. Bryon and Edie Jessup, Unitarian Universalists, Centro La Familia, EOC, College Community Congregational (4), Rev. Ken

continued on page 7

Smiley/United Community Fellowship, Ed Perez and C.J. Dakin, Sequoia Health Care, CSUF Rural Latino Mental Health Project, Community Medical Center, CSUF Social Work Department, Mapa del Valle, Center for New Americans, Fresno Unified School District, Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Stone Soup, United Health Centers, California Food Policy Advocates, Community Food Bank.

Board Members: Francisco Mireles, Vida Samiian, Paula Singer, Rev. Sarah Hubinsky, C.J. Dakin.

Sound: Ed Perez.

Greeters: Laurie Primavera, Paula Singer, Laurie Lobbitt, Mark Etheridge.

Parking: five friends of Francisco Mireles.

Speakers: including Metro Board President Paula Singer, Board Member Rev. Sarah Hubinsky, Rev. Carl Robinson, and interpreter Leoncio Vazquez.

Programs and Invitations: Mike Rhodes and Hume Printing.

The gift of terrific Irish tunes: Chris Eacock and Larry Cusick.

Site: Hope Lutheran Church.

METRO WEBSITE EXPANDS

You can find an excellent inventory of no-cost or low-cost health insurance or services at Metro's website. The updated 2002 "Fresno Area Opportunities For Health Care" is located on the Local Health Care Coalition side of the website under "Eligibility".

Go to www.fresnometroministry.org or www.fresnometmin.org. The document can be downloaded in sections (children, pregnancy, adults, etc.) In addition, five hundred "hard copies" or printed versions will be available soon. In addition, Metro job listings are currently posted on the website.

Read online the notes from the monthly Community Health Care Roundtables and the monthly Hunger and Nutrition Forums. The Hunger page also includes notes on an informative discussion of Hmong elders with Metro staff.

Please return this form by mail, fax, or e-mail: Fresno Metro Ministry, 1055 N. Van Ness Ave., Suite H, Fresno, 93728. Phone: 559.485.1416. Fax: 559.485.9109. E-mail: metromim@qnis.net

____ Yes! I believe Fresno Metro's faith-based work is important to building a respectful, compassionate and just community, and I support Metro's work!

____ My **donation** of \$_____ is enclosed to further Metro's good work!

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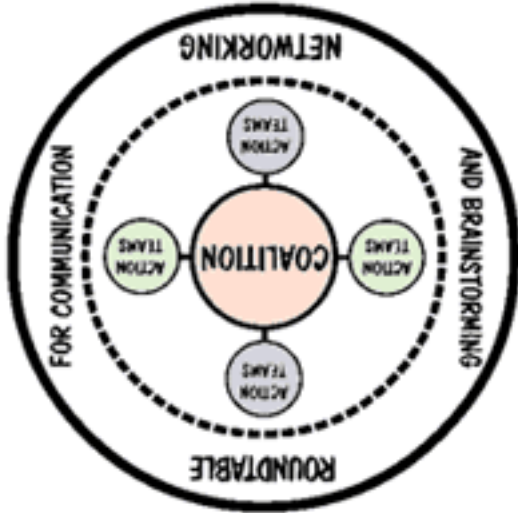
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