

# Agenda Report

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** October 12, 2009  
**THROUGH:** LEGISLATIVE POLICY COMMITTEE  
**FROM:** CITY MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF HEALTH CARE REFORM PRINCIPLES

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

- 1) Adopt a resolution in support of health care reform principles; and
- 2) Authorize the Mayor to send a copy of the resolution to the appropriate elected officials.

**BACKGROUND:**

There is little question that reform is needed for our health care system. Over 6.6 million individuals in California are uninsured at some point during the year, costing the state billions of dollars annually.<sup>1</sup> The rising costs of benefits of current and retired staff have caused increasing numbers of employers to drop or reduce their health coverage plans. It is estimated that the price to governments of continuing to provide comprehensive health coverage at the current rate will increase 15% a year over the next 15 years due to increasing health care costs, an upcoming surge of retirements, and lengthening life spans<sup>2</sup>. In Pasadena, it is estimated that 12% of adults and 6% of children lack health insurance coverage.<sup>3</sup> Individuals and families without health insurance have limited access to health care providers, inappropriately use emergency services, rarely receive preventive health care, and often delay seeking treatments until their conditions are far advanced and more costly to treat. The costs of health insurance benefits threaten the competitiveness of American businesses. For these reasons, health care reform is essential.

<sup>1</sup> California Healthcare Foundation 2006

<sup>2</sup> California Healthcare Foundation

<sup>3</sup> LA County Health Survey, Department of Health Services 2007

A number of competing health reform proposals are being analyzed and debated at the federal level. Due to the complexity of the issue, anticipated modifications to the current proposals, and continuing deliberations, an appropriate action at this time is to express Pasadena's support for general principles that should be included in any health care reform approach. On September 16, 2009, the Legislative Policy Committee reviewed a set of health reform principles developed by the United States Conference of Mayors. These principles were used as the basis for the attached proposed resolution in support of health care reform

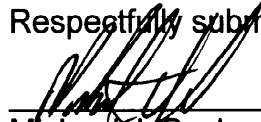
These principles for health care reform are:

- Reduce long-term growth of health care costs for families, individuals, businesses and government
- Protect families from bankruptcy or debt because of health care costs
- Guarantee choice of doctors, hospitals and health plans and the choice of a private or public health care plan
- Invest in prevention and wellness
- Improve patient safety and quality of care for all Americans
- Maintain coverage when someone changes or loses a job
- Assure affordable, quality health coverage for all Americans
- End barriers to coverage for people with pre-existing medical conditions
- Eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse in government health programs
- Hold insurance and drug companies accountable by ensuring that people are not overcharged for prescription drugs or discriminated against for pre-existing conditions
- Support public hospitals and other providers in the health care safety net so that those who fall through the cracks of expanded health coverage may still receive care, and so that surge capacity is available in case of public health emergencies; and, so that the cultural competencies achieved by providers serving diverse populations are preserved and enhanced in a reformed health care system.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Adoption of the attached resolution will not result in a direct fiscal impact to the city.

Respectfully submitted,



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Michael J. Beck  
City Manager

Prepared and Approved by:



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Takashi M. Wada, MD MPH  
Director/Health Officer  
Pasadena Public Health Department

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA IN  
SUPPORT OF HEALTH CARE REFORM PRINCIPLES**

WHEREAS, Cities are on the frontlines of the health care crisis with high rates of uninsurance and underinsurance and rapidly escalating costs affecting local residents, businesses, and workers; and

WHEREAS, City governments spend billions of dollars to provide health coverage to employees, dependents, and retirees, and rising health costs affect cities' ability to provide other city services; and,

WHEREAS, Cities face serious health workforce shortages, particularly among primary care professionals in low-income communities; and,

WHEREAS, Many families and individuals served by city programs have unmet health and mental health needs, complicating efforts to provide effective services; and,

WHEREAS, City public health agencies receive limited federal and state support despite the cost-effectiveness of public health strategies in preventing and addressing chronic diseases; and,

WHEREAS, Nearly 46 million Americans lack health insurance and are less likely than their insured counterparts to receive recommended preventive and screening services, or medicines and treatments that meet the professional standard, and are more likely to die prematurely; and,

WHEREAS, Nearly 9 million children lack health insurance coverage and therefore have fewer well-child visits, worse access to specialists, fewer immunization and more visits to the emergency room than children with health coverage; and,

WHEREAS, Approximately 12% of Pasadena adults and 6% of Pasadena children remain without health insurance coverage; and,

WHEREAS, Millions more Americans are underinsured and at risk of financial ruin if they experience a major illness; and,

WHEREAS, Health care costs, and employment-based health insurance premiums in particular, have increased at rates much higher than inflation or wage growth for the last decade; and,

WHEREAS, Health costs threaten the global competitiveness of American businesses; and,

WHEREAS, Our current health care system focuses on treating disease rather than preventing it or promoting wellness; and,

WHEREAS, There are large disparities in health status and health outcomes based on race, ethnicity, and physical ability, and many health care providers do not offer adequate services to patients with limited English proficiency or limited physical or mental ability; and,

WHEREAS, Chronic diseases pose the greatest challenge to our health care system and our health care delivery system is not well-organized to prevent and treat them; and,

WHEREAS, Public hospitals and clinics, community health centers, and other safety net providers provide care to millions of underserved individuals regardless of income, health coverage, or immigration status; and,

WHEREAS, Many cities have developed innovative programs to expand access to quality health care, make health services more affordable, and improve health care quality while acknowledging that any comprehensive reform must be led by the federal government; and,

WHEREAS, Leaders in both political parties serving in Congress and the White House have called for enactment of comprehensive health care reform; and,

WHEREAS, The President has pledged enactment of comprehensive reform this year, which includes: reducing long-term growth of health care costs for businesses and government; protecting families from bankruptcy or debt because of health care costs; guaranteeing choice of doctors and health plans – including a public plan; investing in prevention and wellness; improving patient safety and quality of care; assuring affordable, quality health coverage for all Americans; maintaining coverage when someone changes or loses a job; and ending barriers to coverage for people with pre-existing medical conditions; and,

WHEREAS, Substantial progress is being made in Congress to engage stakeholders and craft comprehensive reform; and,

WHEREAS, Local governments, as representatives of their residents, as employers, as health care providers and as partners to small and large businesses who struggle with health care costs, should have their voices heard in the crafting of comprehensive reform proposals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the City of Pasadena supports and calls for the immediate enactment of the Administration's health care reform principles and agrees that comprehensive reform should reduce long-term growth of health care costs for businesses and government; protect families from bankruptcy or debt because of health care costs; guarantee choice of doctors and health plans including a public option; invest in prevention and wellness; improve patient safety and quality of care; assure affordable, quality health coverage for all Americans; maintain coverage when someone changes or loses a job; and end barriers to coverage for people with pre-existing medical conditions; eliminate fraud, waste and abuse in government health programs; hold insurance and drug companies accountable by ensuring that people are not overcharged for prescription drugs or discriminated against for pre-existing conditions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the City of Pasadena urges Congress to support public hospitals and other providers in the health care safety net so that those who fall through the cracks of expanded health coverage may still receive care; so that surge capacity is available in case of public health emergencies; and so that cultural competencies achieved by providers serving diverse populations are preserved and enhanced in a reformed health care system;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the appropriate elected officials.

Adopted at the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of the City Council on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2009 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

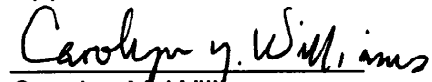
ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

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Mark Jomsky, CMC  
City Clerk

Approved as to form:

  
Carolyn Y. Williams  
Assistant City Attorney