

Part II – Legislative Priorities

Expanded Health Coverage

~~In Pasadena, an estimated one out of every four residents does not have adequate health coverage. Some are uninsured children who are eligible, but not enrolled in available programs. Many are working poor whose employers do not provide insurance or have reduced their coverage due to increasing health care costs. In Pasadena, one in ten residents do not have health insurance.~~ People who are uninsured and underinsured face significant barriers in obtaining needed health services, often leading to needless death, disability, and increased costs of care. Social, economic, racial and ethnic factors also contribute to significant health disparities. To address these issues, the City supports legislation to improve health coverage in a comprehensive manner provided adequate funding and cost controls are in place. Expansion in health insurance programs would also help to reduce the burden of unreimbursed care provided by local emergency services, which has led to a crisis in the emergency medical system in Los Angeles County.

The City supports enhancement to state sponsored health care mechanisms consistent with the set of principles approved in October 2009 by the Pasadena City Council to guide comprehensive health care reform:

- Reduce long-term growth of health care costs for families, individuals, businesses and government;
- Retain coverage for behavioral health services (mental health and substance abuse treatment);
- 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.

~~The City also encourages the state government to provide resources to strengthen the existing public health infrastructure by: 1) helping to address the growing number of uninsured individuals without access to care; 2) developing effective and coordinated community mitigation, preparedness, and response systems for bioterrorism, emergence of new infectious disease threats and other public health emergencies, and 3) assisting with the reduction of health disparities, examination of environmental influences on health and wellness, and expansion of substance abuse recovery programs.~~

Skilled Nursing Facilities

~~Although the City of Pasadena does not license, regulate, or operate primary care, long-term care, or acute care hospital facilities, healthcare access and quality are key factors in improving quality of life for Pasadena residents. As such, the City is committed to exploring ways to hold federal and state regulatory agencies accountable to fulfilling their roles, as well as identifying local mechanisms to support healthcare quality. The City does operate limited healthcare services that interact with the larger private and public health care~~

system: pre-hospital emergency medical services in the Fire Department and immunization, HIV testing and tuberculosis treatment services in the Health Department.

The City supports legislation to enhance protections and care for skilled nursing facility (“SNF”) residents by strengthening state regulation of SNF oversight, financial transparency and accountability. The City opposes legislation that would lead to a decline in SNF resident health outcomes and experiences. Additionally, the City believes state policy reform should better protect SNF residents, and improve the working environment for individuals who care for them.

There are 1,201 licensed beds in the 15 skilled nursing facilities located in Pasadena that are licensed and regulated by the California Department of Public Health. The health and safety of this medically frail population is entirely dependent on the quality of health care provided by privately-owned skilled nursing facility operators and their staff, and the ability of the California Department of Public Health to inspect, cite, and regulate them. The City supports legislation that assures the quality of health care provided at these facilities meets or exceeds state and federal (US Centers for Medicare and Medicaid) regulatory standards and is delivered ethically, responsibly, and equitably. The City supports enhancement of state mechanisms to promote skilled nursing facility accountability, increase state capacity to investigate complaints, and improve state capability to respond to crises through:

- Enhanced resident and family education to promote understanding of their legal rights;
- Provision of adequate medical oversight by a licensed physician in each skilled nursing facility;
- Expanded requirements for professional qualifications to ensure facilities are operated by skilled individuals with a commitment to serving our aging population;
- Strengthened State regulatory authority over management and contracting practices to ensure residents receive the services and resources they pay for at a fair price;
- Improved accountability by increasing fines and penalties for violations of state requirements;
- Increased liability for poor quality of care that causes harm or death to residents;
- Improved State capacity to investigate complaints and capability to respond to crises.

Part III – Funding Priorities (Page 11)

Public Health Services

As one of three cities in the state with its own public health department, the City provides core public health functions including infectious disease surveillance and control, community health assessment and planning, health promotion and policy development, direct clinical services, and environmental health protection and enforcement activities. The nationally accredited Pasadena Public Health Department also serves as a health strategy catalyst, serving as a backbone for collective impact at the local and regional level. The Public Health Department plays a critical role in identifying and responding to outbreaks of disease and other threats to the public’s health, including threats from a bioterrorist incident or other emergency. The City supports continued promotion and community education on the value of immunizations as a method of communicable disease prevention. Additionally, the City supports expanded opportunities for funding to address chronic disease prevention and treatment for conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and other preventable health conditions.

The City supports any funding that strengthens core public health capacities in all relevant areas and opposes any cuts to funding. The City also supports the practice of designating the award of specific funds directly to local health jurisdictions, rather than through county distribution processes. The City supports continued state funding to local health department jurisdictions in support of preparedness, response, and recovery activities in the event of an infectious disease outbreak, epidemic or pandemic, or natural and manmade disasters. The City supports funding opportunities for mental health resources and substance abuse prevention and treatment. In addition, the City supports funding for city-based collective impact initiatives to

improve outcomes for child health, wellness, and educational outcomes. Specifically, these efforts include preventing or mitigating the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), reducing racial disparities in infant mortality and maternal perinatal outcomes, or improving the rates of kindergarten readiness among pre-school age children.

The City also encourages the state government to provide resources to strengthen the existing public health infrastructure by: 1) developing effective and coordinated community mitigation, preparedness, and response systems for bioterrorism, emergence of new infectious disease threats (such as pandemic influenza and novel coronavirus), and other public health emergencies, 2) supporting the achievement of health equity, 3) examining and addressing environmental influences on health and wellness including climate change, and 4) expansion of behavioral health and substance use prevention and recovery programs.