



Convergence

A Periodic E-Zine Published by the Center for Health Improvement

Vol 5: Issue 1
April 6, 2009

► News:

- **Message From CEO Peter Reed: Celebrate National Public Health Week**
- **CHI Policy Forum Examines ‘Aging Well in Place’**
- **Shore Explores Worksite Wellness for City Officials**
- **Reed Publishes Quality Care Work in *International Psychogeriatrics***
- **Gov. Picks CalHEP’s Lawford for Advisory Board**
- **Prevention News Roundup**
- **CHI Resources**



Center for Health Improvement

1330 21st Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95811
916.930.9200
www.chipolicy.org

Know someone who'd like to receive **Convergence**? Prefer to take your name off our [list](#)?

Message From CEO Peter S. Reed

Celebrate National Public Health Week

As National Public Health Week (April 6 – 12) is celebrated across the country, the Center for Health Improvement is taking the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to promoting sound policies and healthy communities in our work to improve population health and encourage healthy behaviors. CHI has partnered with the American Public Health Association’s campaign to heighten awareness of the importance of public health, and we’re celebrating among ourselves with a week’s worth of health and fitness activities and a monthlong “Reduce Your Carbon Footprint” Contest. While CHI engages in these activities to demonstrate our commitment to improving health, we hope you will join us in celebrating National Public Health Week by considering ways you can increase attention surrounding health promotion and disease prevention. Today’s economic and political climates have sparked vibrant dialogue to define the future of health and health care in our country. That means it’s more critical now than ever to work at raising awareness about the importance of public health. I don’t need to remind you that the evidence is clear about the benefits of health promotion and disease prevention for improving health, enhancing quality of life, and reducing the financial burden of ill health. These benefits demand that health promotion and disease prevention are part of any solution to America’s worsening health. Please join CHI in working to ensure that prevention figures prominently in today’s health care debate.

CHI Policy Forum Examines ‘Aging Well in Place’

Experts from across California gathered April 2 at the State Capitol for wide-

ranging discussion of factors that can help older adults remain in their homes as long as reasonably possible as they age. The two-hour forum, called “Aging Well in Place,” explored some health, financial, living and care options for maintaining independence. David Mandel, supervising attorney with California Senior Legal Hotline, spoke of the impact of medical expenses and reimbursement policies on seniors and explored the potential benefits and pitfalls involved in reverse mortgages, so popular today. Catherine Sarkisian, MD, MSPH, professor of geriatrics at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, described her work getting sedentary older Latinos in the Los Angeles area engaged with an evidence-based physical activity program. She told those gathered at the Capitol and listening via squawk box in their offices that the results of increased walking translated into clinically meaningful improvement in health, noting that “exercise could be the magic bullet to prevent disability.” Mark Helmar, chief of long-term care with California’s Department of Health Care Services, explained a Medi-Cal Waiver program designed to deliver services to nursing-home-eligible seniors in assisted living facilities or public housing. The program, which was renewed for a five-year term after an initial three-year pilot in three California counties, will be extended to more counties and people, providing additional services without increased cost. Bob Chason, an independent health care consultant and former CEO of UC Davis Medical Center, described the Davis Neighbors project he hopes to see realized within three years. The development would include 800 units in micro-communities that would allow residents to age in their homes, while having access to a continuum of care through telemedicine and onsite services. Amy Shin, chief administrative officer at On Lok in the Bay Area facilitated the discussion. CHI hosts the California Health Policy Forum, which is funded by The California Endowment, the California Wellness Foundation, and the California HealthCare Foundation, to provide an independent platform for education, idea sharing, and conversation among legislative and executive health policy staff.

Shore Explores Worksite Wellness for City Officials

Speaking at the League of California Cities Personnel and Employee Relations Seminar on March 13, Karen Shore, PhD, presented an overview of the benefits of worksite wellness programs. Shore, who’s a CHI director, noted that disease care is the main driver of health spending, while pointing out that prevention delivers results—returning nearly \$5 for every \$1 invested over a five-year period. Since behavior patterns contribute 40% to health, businesses that implement wellness programs can help employees improve their health at the same time as they save on health care expenses and reduce absenteeism. Shore reviewed best practices, citing that the most successful programs offer individualized risk-reduction counseling, coaching, and self-management training. She detailed the successful Step-Up wellness program funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and implemented by CHI for the California Department of Health Services. That program was so successful that it has been institutionalized in both the California Department of Public Health and California Department of Health Care Services.

Reed Publishes Quality Care Work in *International Psychogeriatrics*

In an article published in mid-March, CHI President and CEO Peter S. Reed, PhD, MPH, teams up with Elizabeth Gould to report on the Alzheimer's Association's Quality Care Campaign, finding that most of those delivering hands-on care to people with dementia do not receive adequate training in dementia care. Published in *International Psychogeriatrics*, "Alzheimer's Association Quality Care Campaign and Professional Training Initiatives: Improving Hands-on Care for People With Dementia in the USA" concludes that staff respond positively to evidence-based training that emphasizes the importance of leadership, team communication and collaboration, support and empowerment of direct care staff, awareness and practice of specific dementia care issues, resident and family involvement in care, and professional self care. Read the [abstract](#).

Gov. Picks CalHEP's Lawford for Advisory Board

In March, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Christopher Kennedy Lawford—California Hepatitis Alliance's honorary steering committee chair—to California's Public Health Advisory Committee. In the unsalaried position, Lawford, together with other committee members, provides advice and recommendations to the state's director of public health on programs and policies to improve the health and safety of Californians and helps identify strategies to improve public health program effectiveness and define emerging public health issues. In addition to serving on CalHEP's steering committee, Lawford is a national spokesperson for the Hepatitis C Public Awareness Campaign for Roche Pharmaceuticals. Lawford has worked extensively in politics, government, and the nonprofit sector in addition to spending 20 years in the film and television business as an actor, executive, and producer. CHI leads CalHEP, a coalition of organizations focusing on fostering sound public health policy and advocacy to improve California's approach to viral hepatitis.

Prevention News Roundup

Most Teens Aren't Getting Preventive Health Care

Almost two-thirds lacked this type of service within past year, UCSF researchers found in the national Medical Expenditure Survey. Read HealthDay's [report](#) in U.S. News & World Report.

Baby Obesity: Rapid Infant Weight Gain Linked to Childhood Obesity

Rapid weight gain during the first six months of life appears to increase the chances that a child will be obese by age 3, according to a new study in the April issue of the journal *Pediatrics*. Read the Chicago Tribune's [report](#).

Circumcision Is Found to Curb Two STDs

Male circumcision, already shown to reduce the incidence of HIV infection in men, also reduces transmission of both herpes simplex virus Type 2 and human papilloma virus, a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* has found. Read The New York Times' [report](#).

For All Their Plusses, Pets Pose a Risk for Falls, Too

Being pulled by a dog or chasing a cat causes many tumbles, the CDC reports. Read the HealthDay [report](#) in *U.S. News & World Report*.

Loneliness Tied to Poorer Health in Old Age

Older adults who lack family and friends, or who feel lonely despite having others around them, tend to be in poorer physical and mental health, a new study in the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* finds. Read Reuter's [report](#).

Lay Health Workers Boost Cancer Screening Rates

Home visits from peers trained as health workers may encourage more low-income Hispanic women to get screened for breast and cervical cancers, a new study in the *American Journal of Public Health* suggests. Read Reuter's [report](#).

CHI Resources

Center for Health Improvement www.chipolicy.org

California Health Policy Forum www.cahpf.org

California Health Policy Forum Resource Guide

<http://www.cahpf.org/doc.asp?id=280>

Health Resource Guide <http://www.healthpolicyguide.org/>

California Hepatitis Alliance www.calhep.org

About the Center for Health Improvement

The Center for Health Improvement is a national, independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving population health and encouraging healthy behaviors. Since its inception in 1995, CHI has used evidence-based research to help public, private, and nonprofit organizations strengthen their capacity to enhance public health at the community level. CHI is located in midtown Sacramento close to California's Capitol. www.chipolicy.org

Convergence ©2009 Center for Health Improvement. All rights reserved.