



Convergence

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

Vol 5: Issue 2
June 25, 2009

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A Note From CHI's President & CEO Peter S. Reed, PhD, MPH

It seems everywhere you turn this summer, health and health care continue to be the dominant topics. Whether among researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, foundations, government agencies, or the popular media, "Reform Fever" is spreading quickly. Here at the Center for Health Improvement, we remain centrally involved in many facets of the ongoing dialogue and are helping to move the cause forward.

I invite you to read this issue of *Convergence* and visit the related links to learn about several new resources we are making available. You will also learn about CHI's work in educating legislators on new directions in health policy, supporting researchers and communities to improve health care quality and reform payment methods, and mobilizing advocates to raise awareness of a disease that directly affects their lives.

Also, I hope you will join me in welcoming CHI's new volunteer leadership. At our June meeting of the board of directors, Dr. Neal Kohatsu of the California Department of Public Health was elected to chair the board, while Dr. Barbara DeBuono of George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services was elected as our new vice chair. Additionally, longtime board members and past chairmen Drs. Lester Breslow and Gordon DeFriese were designated Chairmen Emeriti to recognize their extensive service to CHI and the larger fields of public health and health services.

This truly is an exciting time for health professionals in the United States, and

likewise it is a turning point for the Center for Health Improvement. CHI is re-committing itself to its core values of promoting population health and healthy behaviors through sound policy and healthy communities. Further, CHI is refining its direction to recognize health as a resource for everyday life and encourage health throughout the lifespan. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Convergence*, and I look forward to connecting with you to consider ways we can collaborate to continue enhancing the lives of those we serve.

California Health Policy Forum Examines the Obesity Epidemic

For California to attack the obesity epidemic – especially in this economic crisis – the focus must be on collaboration. That was the theme of the June 25 California Health Policy Forum, “Tackling Obesity: Crossing Silos to Find Solutions,” which brought together experts from across the state to share the innovative approaches they’re taking to address the multifaceted problem of obesity. Lisa Hershey, MPH, chief, Coordinating Office for Obesity Prevention, California Department of Public Health, presented an overview of the state’s plan for tackling obesity. Lisa Cirill, MS, PAPHS, acting chief, California Center for Physical Activity, California Department of Public Health, offered an analysis of how community design, schools, transportation, and parks and recreation can work together to improve the health of children and adults; Gail Feenstra, EdD, food systems analyst, University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program at Davis, spoke of the importance of food and farm-to-schools programs; and Julie Williamson, MPH, director, California Convergence, shared what’s new at her organization, which brings together dozens of community efforts to attack obesity at its roots through access to healthy food and physical activity. Learn more about this forum and the panelists, and access background materials on the California Health Policy Forum [website](#).

Policy Brief Recommends That California Invest in Resilience to Foster Healthy Aging

Based on evidence that fostering resilience may help improve the health and quality of life for seniors and lead to lower health care costs, the California Health Policy Forum published a policy brief in late June recommending that the state invest in programs that target the factors that foster, strengthen, or maintain resilience. As a complement to two recent California Health Policy Forums on healthy aging, CHI developed the brief, which offers concrete policy recommendations, to inform the public policy-making process. Read the [brief](#).

Health Affairs Article Analyzes PROMETHEUS Payment Model

How providers get paid affects delivery of care and cost control. In a June 2009 *Health Affairs* article, Francois de Brantes, Guy D'Andrea, and Meredith B. Rosenthal examined the PROMETHEUS payment model to illustrate the role of warranties in health care and their potential impact on providers'

behavior and profitability. CHI is the administrator for testing of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded PROMETHEUS payment model and offers technical assistance to the pilot sites. [Read the article and learn more about Prometheus.](#)

50+ Attend CalHEP Meeting, Rally at the Capitol

More than 50 advocates from across California attended CalHEP's 3rd Annual Spring Meeting on June 10 and rallied at the Capitol in support of preserving funding for hepatitis screening and syringe exchange programs. Rachel McLean, California's Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator, kicked off the meeting with a discussion of current hepatitis A, B, and C prevention activities and gave an update on California's viral hepatitis strategic plan. A panel discussion on state and federal health reform featured Herb Schultz, senior advisor to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger; Jeff Caballero, executive director of the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations; and Assemblymember Fiona Ma (D-San Francisco). Advocates also met with their state legislators after the rally to discuss the impact of hepatitis on California communities. The California Hepatitis Alliance seeks to reduce the scope and consequences of the hepatitis B and C epidemics, which disproportionately affect California's ethnic communities and the socioeconomically underserved. CalHEP is a program of the Center for Health Improvement. Learn more by visiting CalHEP's [website](#).

CHI Champions Early Detection of Alzheimer's Disease

Because of CHI's commitment to disease prevention, we've joined the Alzheimer's Early Detection Alliance—a group of corporations, nonprofits, and government entities determined to make a difference in the fight against Alzheimer's disease. There's no cure for Alzheimer's disease and no proven method to prevent its onset. Early detection provides an opportunity for affected individuals to take an active role in their own care, plan for their own future, and begin treatment as soon as possible. We encourage you to support the Alzheimer's Association and join in the effort by [knowing the 10 signs](#). Learn more about Alzheimer's disease by visiting www.alz.org or calling the 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900.

Health Promotion News Roundup

Child Health

Early Childhood Conditions That Lead to Adult Health Disparities Identified

The origins of many adult diseases can be traced to early negative experiences associated with social class and other markers of disadvantage. Confronting the causes of adversity before and shortly after birth may be a promising way to improve adult health and reduce premature deaths, researchers argue in a paper published June 2 in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. Read the *Science Daily* [story](#).

Experts: Most Type 2 Diabetes Can Be Stopped in Childhood

An increasing number of children are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Aggressive early treatment and lifestyle changes can help, and even snuff out disease symptoms, but more sweeping health care system changes are required for young diabetics to age into healthy older adults, experts say. Read the [USA Today story](#).

Adult Health

More Patients Across the World Lowering 'Bad' Cholesterol

The percentage of patients lowering their elevated “bad” cholesterol to within target levels nearly doubled in the last decade, according to a multi-national survey reported in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*. Read the [report](#) in *Science Daily*.

Obesity Greatly Raises Endometrial Cancer Risk

Published in the July issue of *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, a study found that women with a body-mass index (BMI) greater than 35 who were younger than 45 at the time of their last menstrual period had a 22 times higher risk of developing endometrial cancers than their normal-weight peers. Read the story in [Forbes](#).

Following a Healthy Lifestyle Is on the Decline in the U.S.

Despite the well-known benefits of having a lifestyle that includes physical activity, eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables, maintaining a healthy weight, moderate alcohol use, and not smoking, only a small proportion of adults follow this healthy lifestyle pattern, and in fact, the numbers are declining, according to an article published in the June 2009 issue of *The American Journal of Medicine*. Read the [report](#) in *Medical News Today*.

Laughter Can Boost Heart Health

Research presented at the American College of Sports Medicine's annual meeting at the end of May found that laughter improves blood flow and may help ward off high blood pressure. Read the [story](#) in *U.S. News & World Report*.

Senior Health

Solitude Speeds Effects of Aging: Social Activity Keeps Motor Function Skills Sharp in Elderly People

A study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* shows that older adults who seldom participate in social activities experience a faster rate of motor function decline than those with an active social life. Researchers at Rush University Medical Center found that each point decrease in a person's social activity score was associated with a 33% faster rate of motor function decline. Read the WebMD [story](#).

Perceived Neighborhood Safety and Incident Mobility Disability

Among Elders: The Hazards of Poverty

Researchers at Harvard University found that perceiving a safety hazard due to neighborhood crime was associated with increased risk of incident mobility disability among impoverished elders near retirement age. Read the article in the May 2009 [*BMC Public Health*](#).

Learn More About CHI

Download our [brochure](#) and an [overview](#) of our services, programs, and customers.

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 Policy 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. For nearly 15 years, our team of public health, health services research, and health policy experts has worked to address the causes underlying America's increasingly unhealthy population. CHI is located in midtown Sacramento close to California's Capitol. www.chipolicy.org

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