

Introducing the Health and Human Services Network

FORGING A VISION FOR WORKING FAMILIES: A “CALIFORNIA RECOVERY PLAN” BUDGET

**CALIFORNIA WORKING FAMILIES POLICY SUMMIT
FEBRUARY 25, 2010**

INTRODUCTION

We are a diverse network of health and human services advocates, allies, and consumers that support creating and protecting jobs, providing a strong safety net where there are no jobs, and bringing home federal funds. We agree that the Governor’s budget proposals will harm California’s economy and make it even harder for California and families to bounce back. Our state cannot afford to lose more jobs or dismantle the structures built to help families through hard times, like job loss, sickness, or old age.

We envision:

- A California that invests in its workers and a changing economy.
- A California that protects our children, families, seniors, and people with disabilities in times of need.
- A California that adapts successfully to the opportunities presented by a changing population.
- A California that reflects its majority’s will and respects its minority’s voices.

POLICY GOAL #1

Invest in & don’t cut the health and human services that are vital to California’s economy and families.

Rationale

Health and human services help hundreds of thousands of Californian go to work, through job training, child care, adult care, and other supports. These services keep workers and their families healthy and safe, so they can contribute to the economy. Health and human services are delivered by tens of thousands of home care workers, health care providers, and case workers. In addition, health care and human services ensure the well-being of our families, our neighbors, and our communities. All of us need health care, emergency rooms, and vaccination systems. Seniors and people with disabilities need in-home support and day care, to keep safe and out of costly institutions. Children need protection from abuse and neglect, and women need services to prevent and respond to domestic violence.

POLICY GOAL #2

Require that alternatives to dismantling our health care and human services be part of the solution.

Rationale:

Key federal investments – including MediCal’s enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage and TANF’s Emergency Contingency Fund – have prevented deep economic and individual harm since the Recovery Act’s enactment one year ago. Now, as the recession continues, an extension is needed to help California’s economy, state budget, and families recover. The need to cut services, lay off workers, and eliminate programs can be further reduced through common-sense revenues. Options include extending temporary taxes approved in last year’s budget, repealing the secret corporate tax breaks passed last year, and passing an oil severance tax. Finally, opportunities for smart cuts must be considered – for example, ending the inefficient fingerprinting of families seeking services and redirecting ineffective corrections spending.

POLICY GOAL #3

Advance reforms to re-invent our broken state budget process.

Rationale

State government is unable to deliver an annual budget that shares the sacrifice required among all Californians, reflects the majority's will, and is on time. The budget system must and can be transformed, through a series of policy changes. Beginning this year, the budget process must be more transparent to all legislators and the public, with much less reliance on private "Big 5" meetings of the Governor and legislative leadership. More accountability of elected officials to voters is needed, through a re-consideration of proposals on legislative districts, open primaries, and term limits. Most of all, our governance decisions on budgets, including taxes, must reflect majority rule, while respecting minority voices.

HHS Network participants include:

Health Access, Western Center on Law and Poverty, California Partnership, California Immigrant Policy Center, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers, Lutheran Office of Public Policy, California Alliance for Retired Americans, AARP California, California Primary Care Association, Disability Rights California, Commission on the Status of Women, Jericho for Justice, California Alternative Payment Program Association, California Congress of Seniors, California Association of Food Banks, National Association of Social Workers – California Chapter, County Welfare Directors Association of California, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, and many others.

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