

# LegAlert



24 September 2008



## Getting to Aye

### Urge Governor to Sign Universal Healthcare Bill

Your help is needed to persuade Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to sign a CTA-cosponsored measure that would implement California's first-ever universal healthcare proposal. This is the second year that CTA and its allies have been able to move the measure to the governor's desk. But in 2006, the governor vetoed the bill. Now is the time to try changing his mind.

#### **Background**

This year's SB 840, by Sen. Sheila Kuehl (D-Santa Monica), implements major elements of CTA policy. The bill regards health coverage as a basic right, and it seeks to implement universal coverage that controls excessive costs, ensures patient choice, and does not fragment risk pools. The measure would reallocate the \$186 billion spent each year on health care in California to reduce overhead and provide more direct healthcare. It is a major step toward realizing the Association's goal of universal access, coverage expansion, cost containment and affordability. A quality education system for Californians cannot happen without healthcare reform that doesn't come at public education's expense.

SB 840 guarantees consumers the freedom to choose their health care providers, and it calls for fair reimbursements for providers. SB 840 would improve the quality of health care while reigning in the growth of healthcare spending. While wages have increased 20% since 2000, health insurance premiums have increased 87%, and employees contribute 143% more to their company-sponsored health insurance. CTA members often find that their salary increases are eroded by skyrocketing medical costs.

SB 840 is modeled after Medicare. The bill would fund healthcare using payroll taxes on employers and employees and provide cost savings by greatly

reducing existing health care administrative costs and profit. The best means to arrest healthcare inflation and provide access to affordable healthcare for all Californians is through a single payer system able to:

- Reduce administrative costs.
- Utilize bulk purchasing of prescription drugs.
- Maintain consumer choice in selecting providers (doctors, hospitals, etc.).
- Expand coverage to all.

SB 840 establishes a Blue Ribbon Panel (California Healthcare Premium Commission) composed of representatives of economists, business, health reform advocates, labor as well as legislators, and other state government officials to

- Determine the aggregate costs of providing healthcare.
- Develop an equitable and affordable structure to provide sound funding for the healthcare system.
- Submit detailed action recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature and the public.

#### **CTA Coordinators; Here's How to Help**

✓ *Get in touch with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and urge him to sign SB 840. Write or fax him:*

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: 916-445-2841  
Fax: 916-558-3160 (new number)

✓ *Organize other CTA members and school supporters in your area to contact the governor and urge him to sign SB 840 (Kuehl).*

*For more information, contact CTA Legislative Advocate Mike Egan or GR Communications Consultant Len Feldman at 916.325.1500.*

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