

Letter From the Director

Kris Calvin, AAP-CA CEO/Executive Director

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-District Board News

The AAP-CA District Board met this past Sunday, January 7th, in Los Angeles. This was a regularly scheduled Board meeting to accomplish the business of the District. But there were a number of firsts: it was the first meeting helmed by District Chair Myles Abbott, MD; the first meeting of Eileen Aicardi, MD as Chapter One Vice-President; and the first meeting of Marc Lerner, MD as Chair of the AAP-CA State Government Affairs (SGA) Committee.

Highlights of the meeting included a session with District Counsel Bill Webster to address questions about our draft District bylaws. The District expects to file for incorporation as a 501c 4 this summer, and new bylaws are part of that process. Also of importance was discussion regarding the reconstitution of the AAP-CA SGA Committee. Under Dr. Lerner's leadership, SGA Committee membership shall be comprised of two representatives from each Chapter, the District Chair, Alternate District Chair, SGA Chair and District Resident representative. This new configuration reduces the number of SGA Committee members from approximately 23 to 13. While the past committee was certainly effective, it is anticipated that this leaner size will create efficiencies and allow for more depth in discussion by each member.

Also at Sunday's meeting the Board approved, in concept, formation of a Pediatric Council to work with health plans and related entities on issues of importance to children and pediatrics. Stuart Cohen, MD, will act as the lead Board liaison to that Council. Finally, Mary Doyle, MD of Chapter 2, accepted the Board's appointment as interim Treasurer for the District. an important post for which she has considerable relevant skills and experience.

-Launching his New Term: The Governor's Plan

Monday, I attended a Sacramento invitational release of the Governor's Health Care Reform proposal. Tuesday, I joined a viewing of the Governor's State of the State speech and a panel discussion afterwards hosted by the California Endowment. Among the panelists were Robert Ross, MD, FAAP, and CEO of the Endowment and Wendy Lazarus, founder of the Children's Partnership. Finally, Wednesday the Governor released his proposed budget for 2007-2008, which I am in the process of reviewing. With respect to health care, the Governor stressed the broad themes of universal coverage, prevention and wellness, shared responsibility, and affordability.

As to the state of the state and the budget, the Governor is stressing fiscal accountability and no new taxes; he has proposed a budget aimed at "a zero deficit this year", although a structural deficit will remain.

-AAP-CA Engagement in the Access Debate

The AAP-CA has been actively engaged in the access conversations in the Capital. Universal access to care for children is a priority issue for us.

To that end, following discussions with SGA Chair Marc Lerner and other District leadership I met with one of the Governor's senior health care team, Herb Schultz, some weeks ago to provide input into the proposal. Dr. Lerner and I will be joining a group of primary care physician organization representatives to speak with Mr. Schulz again next week. We will provide him with the initial response that the AAP-CA applauds the Governor's leadership in this area, as well as the emphasis he has placed on the need for universal coverage, including the undocumented. At the same time, we will ask for more information about troubling specifics in his proposal, including a 2% tax on physician's gross revenue and a move to take money away from the county safety net. We look forward to continued dialogue with the Administration; our goal is to see health care reform happen in an appropriate way for children and the practice of pediatrics. We are also engaging with legislative leaders and others who have put health care proposals on the table, including Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez and Senate Leader Perata. Watch for future updates for analysis and comparisons of the plans.

-Adolescent Immunizations

AAP-CA has been working on several fronts to support adolescent immunizations. AAP-CA Board member Stuart Cohen, MD submitted an AAP-CA supported resolution to the CMA House asking CMA to carry legislation to mandate ACIP-recommended vaccines for school entry for adolescents. The resolution passed, and CMA has acted promptly to exert leadership in this area. AAP-CA is a cosponsor of legislation that is being developed by the California Coalition of Childhood Immunization (C3I) to require pertussis vaccination for adolescent school entry and to establish a broader school entry regulatory process within DHS. CMA is working with us on this effort and it is anticipated that a single AAP-CA and CMA-supported bill is likely to emerge, authored by Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas. (A bill number and text will be shared when this is finalized.) There is also an existing bill to mandate only HPV for adolescent school entry, AB 16 (Leiber). (While AAP-CA was not involved in the development of the Leiber bill, it is likely that we will support it, pending discussion about reimbursement issues.)

I look forward to your comments and feedback.

Have a nice weekend!

Kris