

Report on the Medical Leadership Council on Cultural Proficiency

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The Medical Leadership Council (MLC) is a collaborative group sponsored by the California Academy of Family Physicians and supported by a grant from the California Endowment. The council meets each year in Los Angeles and Sacramento. The members of the council include medical societies (e.g., Los Angeles County Medical Association, San Bernardino County Medical Society, California Medical Association, etc.), specialty societies (e.g., American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists, etc.), hospital systems (e.g., Kaiser Permanente, Catholic Healthcare West, etc.) and many cultural, health advocate, ethnic and other interested parties. The MLC is dedicated to removing the cultural and language barriers to healthcare that exist in the medical field.

As a representative of the AAP California District IX, I present the issues to the group that may concern both our constituencies: our pediatric aged patients and our physician members. Additionally, the Executive Director of AAP-CA, Kris Calvin is a representative as well.

The most recent meeting was held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento on November 28, 2007. The event was well attended and a number of presentations were made to highlight the current status of the states' healthcare system. First, an update on various health reform proposals was presented. Included in this update was the California Pan Ethnic Health Network summary of the three proposals, Nunes/Perata (Assembly Bill 8), Schwarzenegger and Kuehl (Senate Bill 840). There were a number of similarities between the various plans, but the main differences were in how the financing would be implemented. Concerns were voiced about the individual mandate, affordability and financing provisions in Assembly Bill 8 (Nunez/Perata), a late proposal being brought up in the assembly.

Discussion continued about the need for diversity in the physician work force in the future. It was noted that the new medical school at UC Riverside is to be dedicated in part to fulfilling that need. The officers and other individuals (including myself) of AAP Chapter 2 recently met with the organization committee of UCR medical school to discuss our involvement in the development of pediatrics in the program.

Another update at the meeting was presented by Lupe Alonzo-Diaz, which dealt with various means of reimbursement for language access services. The report mentioned how such activity has been accomplished in the few states that currently fund reimbursement. There are four models of how this is done, but none will work for a state the size and complexity of California. Therefore a hybrid model was discussed as a possibility.

Distributed at the meeting were examples of some useful new booklets available from the Medi-Cal Managed Care and Healthy Families Programs in the Oakland area. These contain contact numbers and services available for the members who need it in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese Mandarin, and Korean. Another excellent resource distributed at the

meeting was the booklet, Addressing Language and Culture: A Practice Assessment for Health Care Professionals. This is available from the CAFP Foundation, at www.familydocs.org.