

# UNITED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with Public Employees Union, Local 1



July– August

## INSIGHT

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>2008 HMO rates</i>	2
<i>Health Benefits are</i>	2
<i>Certification Pay</i>	3
<i>COLA and Dues</i>	4
<i>Union Budget Cuts</i>	4

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## PERB ISSUES CHARGE AGAINST COUNTY OVER RETIREE HEALTH CUTS

On July 10<sup>th</sup> UPE representatives for the Office Technical unit and the Welfare Non-Supervisory unit along with UPE Executive director Sandra Poole and Local 1 Attorney Margot Rosenberg attended a 'settlement conference' at the Public Employment Relations Board.

PERB has issued charges against Sacramento County on the complaint filed by UPE over the Board of Supervisors changes to eligibility for retiree health benefits.

Attending the Conference were Office Technical Board Officers Steve Wolfanger and Ernestine Stoddard and Board of Director officers James Starr and Sally Rydell.

The conference was short-

lived after the PERB officer pointed out to the County representatives that the full PERB Board had just ruled against the employer on a similar charge in another county.

UPE attorneys have shared information with other unions and now at least three other employee organizations have filed similar Unfair Labor Practice Charges.

A full hearing is set for October 12<sup>th</sup>. UPE and the other coalition unions will likely join our cases together for that hearing.

UPE is more convinced than ever that the County's actions to change the retiree health benefits were adopted illegally.

We assert that the type of changes the County made were mandatory subjects of bargaining. The County at first declared that it was 'permissive' bargaining, and then withdrew its request to bargain at all.

UPE also claims that because of the wording in our contract and proposals at last year's negotiations, that the subject of retiree health benefits for UPE members who retire during the life of the contract cannot be changed.

UPE continues to work closely with other unions and the Sacramento County Retirees Association to fight for this important benefit.

## IF YOU VALUE YOUR PENSION DON'T SIGN THE PETITION

A foundation led by former Assemblyman Keith Richman has filed an initiative with the Secretary of State that would slash California's state and local government pension benefits. The initiative also raises the age at which employees qualify for full benefits.

The initiative will likely be circulated across the state at grocery stores and shopping

malls in the next few weeks. And if history is any indicator, they will use scare tactics and distorted facts. Richman calls your pension "extravagant."

If this initiative makes it to the ballot, your pensions will be voted on early next year.

The provisions include rolling back your pension formula to 1% per year. There are many other serious cuts involved.

### What do you need to do?

The first line of defense is to keep this initiative off the ballot.

**DO NOT SIGN THE PETITION** and talk to your family and friends now so they don't sign either.

And if gets on the ballot, prepare for a fight!



## UPE pushed County to hold down rates; Keep More HMO Choices

On Friday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, Sacramento County agreed, at least in part, with UPE and the other employee organizations that fully implementing their plan for consolidating health plans was a bad idea for 2008.

Despite their claims during contract negotiations that consolidating HMOs would result in lower costs, the bids by the insurance companies for 2008 were quite the opposite. For

comparison purposes, each carrier was asked to give two bids - one as if all four HMOs would be available in 2008 and the other as if they and Kaiser would be the only carriers.

If all four HMOs were kept, Health Net's rates would have increased 11.2% but under the County's consolidation plan would have increase by a whopping 18%. UPE was adamant that the County should not

push these additional costs on to employees. In response, the County came back with an alternate plan that consolidates from four to three HMOs in 2008.

The county announced that for 2008, it will keep Kaiser, Health Net and Blue Shield HMOs. These rates and plans are expected to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 14.

### **Open and Read Your Open Enrollment Packet!**

*Never before have there been so many confusing changes to your health insurance plans.*

*Nearly EVERY employee will have to at least consider making plan changes. Some of the changes are permanent and irrevocable while not making other choices may cost you money.*

PROPOSED 2008 HMO Health Plan Premiums			
Plan	Type	Total premium	% Increase
Kaiser	HMO	\$ 438.10 (single)	8.4%
		\$1120.36 (family)	
Health Net	HMO	\$ 493.81 (single)	13.41%
		\$1262.82 (family)	
Blue Shield	HMO	\$ 574.44 (single)	16.91%
		\$1470.58 (family)	

**Also new for 2008:** Remember that there will be many other changes to the health plans in 2008. Nearly every member will have to review the plans carefully and make changes during open enrollment.

**Catastrophic plan ends with 2007.** You may waive coverage entirely in 2008 if you have another group plan.

**High Deductible Plans:** BE SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT OPTION FOR YOUR FAMILY. High deductible plans may have LOWER premiums BUT they pay NOTHING until you have paid a high deductible out of your own pocket. The deductible is at least \$1500 for single employees with an even higher deductible for families.

**There are important changes to the County subsidy for Tier A and Tier B employees. BE INFORMED!**

## INCENTIVE PAY POLICY NEARS ROLL OUT

UPE and the County Management team is nearing completion on the process and rules for the Certification Incentive pay. Once the rules and form are in place, the Certification Pay will be retroactive for

those members in covered classifications.

According to UPE Office Technical Chair, Steve Wolfanger, "We are trying to have a simple way to award the Certifica-

tion Incentive pay. We don't want members having to jump through a lot of bureaucratic hoops." Watch the UPE website for details on the incentive pay at [www.upe1.org](http://www.upe1.org)

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BY SANDRA POOLE



Last Sunday I was out running errands before I was to meet a friend for dinner and to see the Michael Moore movie **SICKO** at the Tower Theater.

One of my errands was to stop by Kaiser pharmacy to pick up a refill. I couldn't help overhearing the man in front of me taking to the pharmacy clerk. "I'm changing jobs," he said, "and I'm not sure about my coverage." He pushed forward two empty pill bottles explaining that one was his and one was for his wife. The clerk checked the wife's first and said it was covered. "Great, fill them both please." But then he hit a snag, "Sorry, sir, you aren't covered." "Well," he said "I guess I'll have to pay for it. How much

is it?" **\$1,422** was her answer. He made her repeat it 3 times. "Yes," she said, that's one thousand four hundred and twenty two dollars for 200 pills." The man recoiled and walked away without the meds.

Michael Moore's movie really hit home. It is not about the 50 million Americans without health care coverage. It is about us—working people who can't afford the premiums or co-payments, or who lose their coverage when they lose their job or become ill or retire. It's about our kids and grandkids who won't have much of a chance at health coverage at all.

My daughter died six years ago while in an emergency room waiting to be admitted. She'd been turned away from another ER because she didn't have coverage. She was a working mom with three kids. I still can't talk about it much.

I don't know if everything in Moore's movie is 100% accurate. It doesn't really matter. He's right about the main thing. Our health care system is **SICK!** And its up to us to fix it.

Go see **SICKO**—its only \$5 at the matinee. Then email me at [info@upe1.org](mailto:info@upe1.org). We **have** to find a way to effectively demand quality, affordable health care, for ourselves and for our children.

*"We have to find a way to effectively demand quality, affordable health care for ourselves and our children"*

## MEMBERS IN CLERK RECORDERS OFFICE STEP UP

The Clerk Recorders office presented a plan to UPE over the opening of satellite offices. UPE OT Board members, staff and members from the Clerk Recorders office convinced the County to modify their proposal. Concerns addressed by UPE include fairness in the selection process, coverage, and return rights. The agreement is online at [www.upe1.org/agreements.html](http://www.upe1.org/agreements.html).

The Sacramento County Clerk Recorder's Office also presented a proposal to UPE, Local 1 to contract out the conversion of its' vital statistic documents and

office records to digital images. These digital documents will be made available to the public online.

Business Agent and Chief Negotiator Edgard Mayorga, Governing Board members **Ernestine Stoddard** and **Laurie Jones**, along with three UPE members from the Clerk Recorders Office participated in negotiations over the impact to the bargaining unit.

Since the work will be for a

short duration, Local 1 agreed it will not object to this contract, but will carefully monitor the Department for any impact on our members' jobs. This conversion project is part of an overall plan to open the regional satellite offices for the Clerk Recorders Department.

Thank you to the members **Kathy Knight**, **Brian Lucero** and **Steve Wright** for participating in the meet and confer and helping to protect their co-workers rights.

## SILLY SUSPENSION AVOIDED

A member was assisting a customer at the counter. The ASO overheard the conversation and asserted that the member was "loud and argumentative."

For the supposed actions towards the customer, the ASO recommended that the member receive a three day suspension. The member called the Union and told the business agent that the per-

son that she was supposedly arguing with was a friend. The friend is hard of hearing so she has to speak up; moreover, they belong to the same social club and were discussing a club activity.

The Union and the member met with the Skelly Officer and related what really happened—a conversation between friends with one of the

friends having a hearing impairment. After a few weeks, the Skelly Officer dismissed the entire three day proposed suspension. Remember, if you are called into a meeting, discussion, or investigation that could lead to discipline tell them you want to talk it over with your Union Rep first. It's your right!

**UNITED PUBLIC  
EMPLOYEES**

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**UPE, Local #1**

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*The Board of Directors meets on the  
2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 pm*

**UPE, Local #1  
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*Tim Patterson*

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*Richard Williams*

*The OT Governing Board meets the 1st  
Wednesday of the month at 6 pm*

## COLA AND ASSESSMENT INCREASE JULY 1

Effective with the current pay period members will see two changes on their paychecks. The 2007 Cost of Living Adjustment of 2.9% negotiated by UPE should be on your paychecks. Members will also see a change in the temporary dues assessment.

The Cola was negotiated in last years negotiations. A new way of calculating the cost of living increased the COLA from 2.7% to 2.9%.

In January of 2006, the PEU Local #1 Board voted to enact a 1/10 of 1% special assessment to membership dues effective that budget year. In December of 2006 the Board voted to continue that assessment for the 2007 budget year. The Board also approved an increase in the assessment to 2/10 of 1% beginning on July 1, 2007 to prevent major layoffs of union staff. The Board authorized a dues election in hopes for a permanent solution. The dues election was held in May of this year and the majority of the members that voted decided not to increase the permanent change to the dues rate. At the Board of Directors meeting on June 18, 2007 and after much discussion, the Board reaffirmed the decision made in January of 2007 to move forward with the new temporary special assessment rate of 2/10 of 1% while we begin making staff cuts.

The special assessment rate is effective July 1, 2007. The effective dues rate through December of 2007 will be 1.2% of base salary.

\*Note: The Local #1 By-Laws limits the PEU Board 's ability to authorize a special assessment to no more than 3 years out of any 5 year period.

## LOCAL 1 BOARD CUTS STAFF POSITIONS AS LEGAL /OPERATING COSTS RISE

At their regular June meeting the Public Employees Union, Local #1 Board of Directors completed their mid-year budget review. With a loss of revenue and a need to increase funds for legal expenses the Board scoured the budget for places to reduce expenses. With over 70% of the budget allocated to employee staff, another 12% in rent and building expenses, 5% in legal costs and 5% for member communications there is very little to be saved on "miscellaneous" reductions. With a need to reduce expenditures by \$100,000 the Board turned to the difficult task of reducing staff. The Board eliminated one Business Agent position in Sacramento and the positions of Legislative/Political Director and Communications and Special Projects Director.

Local 1 has provided the best staff-to-member ratio of any union in the California public

sector; less than 600 members per Business Agent.

Eliminating the Legislative/Political Director position results in the layoff of Julia Jenkins and reduces to near zero Local 1's connection to state and federal legislators and legislation. With no ability to work effectively on legislation and no staff to coordinate our political action Local 1 will focus all of our political action efforts on electing employee favorable candidates to local boards and councils. Eliminating the Communications and Special Projects Director position causes the layoff of Sandra Hamameh and the elimination of Local 1 wide communications such as the Local 1 Connected, reduces the ability to keep the web site updated and will prevent the organization of special member events.

The recent legislative conference on Health Care was the

result of the combined efforts of Ms. Jenkins and Ms. Hamameh; Local 1 will be unable to produce another conference in the foreseeable future.

While the temporary assessment will stave off more staff cuts for now, more cuts loom when the temporary assessment ends.

### **BENEFITS OPEN ENROLLMENT IS COMING!**

Don't forget:  
**READ YOUR PACKET  
ATTEND A MEETING**

Even if you aren't changing plans you may need to make other decisions that will affect your coverage and your costs!